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LOWER BAR MOKELUMNE RIVER

ELDORADO

HAYARD TAYLOR



San Francisco in November 1846

Eldorado Edition

THE WORKS
OF
BAYARD TAYLOR

VOLUME II

ELDORADO
THE STORY OF KENNETT



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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ELDORADO

OR

ADVENTURES IN THE PATH OF EMPIRE
(MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA)

BY

BAYARD TAYLOR

AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION

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1882

TO

EDWARD F. BEALE, LIEUT., U. S. N.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

WITH

THE AUTHOR'S ESTEEM AND AFFECTION

P R E F A C E.

THIS work requires but few words in the way of introduction. Though the author's purpose in visiting California was not to write a book, the circumstances of his journey seemed to impose it upon him as a duty, and all his observations were made with this end in view. The condition of California, during the latter half of the year 1849, was as transitory as it was marvellous; the records which were then made can never be made again. Seeing so much that was worthy of being described—so many curious and shifting phases of society—such examples of growth and progress, most wonderful in their first stage—in a word, the entire construction of a new and sovereign State, and the establishment of a great commercial metropolis on the Pacific coast—the author suffered no opportunity to pass, which might qualify him to preserve their fleeting images. As he was troubled by no dreams of gold, and took no part in exciting schemes of trade, he has hoped to give an impartial coloring to the picture. His impressions of California are those of one who went to see and write, and who sought

to do both faithfully. Whatever may be the faults of his work he trusts this endeavor will be recognized.

A portion, only, of the pages which follow, were included in the original letters which appeared in the columns of the New-York Tribune. Many personal incidents, and pictures of society as it then existed in California, noted down at the time, have been added, and a new form given to the materials obtained. The account of the author's journey across Mexico, is now published for the first time.

If, when a new order of things has been established and what has occurred is looked upon as a phenomenon of the Past, some of these pages should be preserved as a record and remembrance thereof, the object of this work will be fully accomplished.

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ELDORADO.

CHAPTER I.

FROM NEW YORK TO CHAGRES.

On the 28th of June, 1849, I sailed from New York, in the U. S. Mail steamship Falcon, bound for Chagres. About eight months had elapsed since the tidings of an Eldorado in the West reached the Atlantic shore. The first eager rush of adventurers was over, yet there was no cessation to the marvellous reports, and thousands were only waiting a few further repetitions, to join the hordes of emigration. The departure of a steamer was still something of an incident. The piers and shipping were crowded with spectators, and as the Falcon moved from her moorings, many a cheer and shout of farewell followed her. The glow and excitement of adventure seemed to animate even those who remained behind, and as for our passengers, there was scarcely one who did not feel himself more or less a hero. The deck rang with songs, laughter and gaily-spoken anticipations of roving life and untold treasure, till we began to feel the heavy swell rolling inward from Sandy Hook.

Rough weather set in with the night, and for a day or two we were all in the same state of torpid misery. Sea-sickness—next to Death, the greatest leveler—could not, however, smooth down the striking contrasts of character exhibited among the pas-

sengers. Nothing less than a marvel like that of California could have brought into juxtaposition so many opposite types of human nature. We had an officer of the Navy, blunt, warm-hearted and jovial ; a captain in the merchant service, intelligent and sturdily-tempered ; Down-Easters, with sharp-set faces—men of the genuine stamp, who would be sure to fall on their feet wherever they might be thrown ; quiet and sedate Spaniards ; hilarious Germans ; and some others whose precise character was more difficult to determine. Nothing was talked of but the land to which we were bound, nothing read but Frémont's Expedition, Emory's Report, or some work of Rocky Mountain travel.

After doubling Cape Hatteras, on the second day out, our monotonous life was varied by the discovery of a distant wreck. Captain Hartstein instantly turned the Falcon's head towards her, and after an hour's run we came up with her. The sea for some distance around was strewn with barrels, fragments of bulwarks, stanchions and broken spars. She was a schooner of a hundred tons, lying on her beam ends and water-logged. Her mainmast was gone, the foremast broken at the yard and the bowsprit snapped off and lying across her bows. The mass of spars and rigging drifted by her side, surging drearily on the heavy sea. Not a soul was aboard, and we made many conjectures as to their fate.

We lay to off Charleston the fourth night, waiting for the mails, which came on board in the morning with a few forlorn-looking passengers, sick and weary with twenty-four hours' tossing on the swells. In the afternoon we saw Tybee Lighthouse, through the veil of a misty shower. The sun set among the jagged piles of a broken thunder-cloud, and ribbon-like streaks of lightning darted all round the horizon. Our voyage now began to have a real in-

terest With the next sunrise, we saw the Lighthouse of St Augustine and ran down the shores of Florida, inside the Gulf Stream, and close to the edges of the banks of coral. The passengers clustered on the bow, sitting with their feet hanging over the guards, and talking of Ponce de Leon, De Soto, and the early Spanish adventurers. It was unanimously voted that the present days were as wonderful as those, and each individual emigrant entitled to equal credit for daring and enterprise. I found it delightful to sit all day leaning over the rails, watching the play of flying-fish the floating of purple nautili on the water, or looking off to the level line of the shore. Behind a beach of white sand, half a mile in breadth and bordered by dense thickets, rise the interminable forests of live oak, mangrove and cypress. The monotony of this long extent of coast is only broken by an occasional lagoon, where the deep green of the woods comes down upon the lighter green of the coral shoals, or by the huts of wreckers and their trim, duck-like crafts, lying in the offings. The temperature was delicious, with a light, cloudy sky, and a breeze as soft and balmy as that of our northern May. The afternoons commenced with a heavy thunder-shower, after which the wind came fresh from the land, bringing us a rank vegetable odor from the cypress swamps.

On the morning of July 5th, I took a station on the wheel-house, to look out for Cuba. We had left Florida in the night, and the waves of the Gulf were around us. The sun, wheeling near the zenith, burned fiercely on the water. I glowed at my post, but not with his beam. I had reached the flaming boundary of the Tropics, and felt that the veil was lifting from an unknown world. The far rim of the horizon seemed as if it would never break into an uneven line. At last, towards noon, Capt Hartstein handed me the ship's glass. I swept the southern dis-

tance, and discerned a single blue, conical peak rising from the water—the well-known Pan of Matanzas. As we drew nearer, the Iron Mountains—a rugged chain in the interior—rose, then the green hills along the coast, and finally the white beach and bluffs, the coral reefs and breakers. The shores were buried in vegetation. The fields of young sugar-cane ran along the slopes; palms waved from the hill-tops, and the country houses of planters lay deep in the valleys, nestling in orange groves. I drank in the land-wind—a combination of all tropical perfumes in one full breath of cool air—with an enjoyment verging on intoxication, while, point beyond point, we followed the enchanting coast.

We ran under the battlements of the Moro at six o'clock, and turning abruptly round the bluff of dark rock on which it is built, the magnificent harbor opened inland before us. To the right lay the city, with its terraced houses of all light and brilliant colors, its spacious public buildings, spires, and the quaint, half-oriental pile of its cathedral, in whose chancel repose the ashes of Christopher Columbus. The immense fortress of the Moro crowned the height on our left, the feathery heads of palm-trees peering above its massive, cream-colored walls. A part of the garrison were going through their evening exercises on the beach. Numberless boats skimmed about on the water, and a flat ferry-steamer, painted green and yellow, was on its way to the suburb of Regoles. Around the land-locked harbor, two miles in width, rose green hills, dotted with the country palaces of the nobility. Over all this charming view glowed the bright hues of a southern sunset.

On account of the cholera at New York, we were ordered up to the Quarantine ground and anchored beside the hulk of an old frigate, filled with yellow-fever patients. The Health Officers received the mail and ship's papers at the end of a long pole, and

dipped them in a bucket of vinegar. The boats which brought us water and vegetables were attended by Cuban soldiers, in white uniform, who guarded against all contact with us. Half-naked slaves, with the broad, coarse features of the natives of Congo, worked at the pump, but even they suffered the rope-end or plank which had touched our vessel, to drop in the water before they handled it. After sunset, the yellow-fever dead were buried and the bell of a cemetery on shore tolled mournfully at intervals. The steamer Isabel, and other American ships, were anchored beside us, and a lively conversation between the crews broke the stillness of the tropical moonlight resting on the water. Now and then they struck into songs, one taking up a new strain as the other ceased—in the style of the Venetian gondoliers, but with a different effect. “Tasso’s echoes” are another thing from “the floating scow of old Virginny.” The lights of the city gleamed at a distance, and over them the flaming beacon of the Moro. Tall palms were dimly seen on the nearer hills, and the damp night-air came heavy with the scent of cane-fields, orange groves and flowers.

A voyage across the Gulf is the perfection of sea-traveling. After a detention of eighteen hours at Havana, we ran under the frowning walls of the Moro, out on its sheet of brilliant blue water, specked with white-caps that leaped to a fresh north-easter. The waves are brighter, the sky softer and purer, the sunsets more mellow than on the Atlantic, and the heat, though ranging from 88° to 95° in the shade, is tempered by a steady and delicious breeze.

Before catching sight of land, our approach to the Mississippi was betrayed by the water. Changing to a deep, then a muddy green, which, even fifteen or twenty miles from shore, rolls its

stratum of fresh water over the bed of denser brine, it needed no soundings to tell of land ahead. The light on the South Pass was on our starboard at dusk. The arm of the river we entered seemed so wide in the uncertain light, that, considering it as one of five, my imagination expanded in contemplating the size of the single flood, bearing in its turbid waves the snows of mountains that look on Oregon, the ice of lakes in Northern Minnesota and the crystal springs that for a thousand miles gush from the western slope of the Alleghanies. When morning came, my excited fancies seemed completely at fault. I could scarcely recognize the Father of Waters in the tortuous current of brown soap-suds, a mile in width, flowing between forests of willow and cypress on one side and swamps that stretched to the horizon on the other. Everything exhibited the rank growth and speedy decay of tropical vegetation. The river was filled with floating logs, which were drifted all along the shore. The trees, especially the cypress, were shrouded in gray moss, that hung in long streamers from the branches, and at intervals the fallen thatch of some deserted cabin was pushed from its place by shrubbery and wild vines.

Near the city, the shores present a rich and cultivated aspect. The land is perfectly flat, but the forest recedes, and broad fields of sugar cane and maize in ear come down to the narrow levee which protects them from the flood. The houses of the planters low, balconied and cool, are buried among orange trees, acacias and the pink blossoms of the crape myrtle. The slave-huts adjoining, in parallel rows, have sometimes small gardens attached but are rarely shaded by trees.

I found New Orleans remarkably dull and healthy. The city was enjoying an interregnum between the departure of the cholera

and the arrival of the yellow fever. The crevasse, by which half the city had lately been submerged, was closed, but the effects of the inundation were still perceptible in frequent pools of standing water, and its scenes daily renewed by incessant showers. The rain came down, "not from one lone cloud," but as if a thousand cisterns had been stove in at once. In half an hour after a shower commenced, the streets were navigable, the hack-horses splashing their slow way through the flood, carrying home a few drenched unfortunates.

The Falcon was detained four days, which severely tested the temper of my impatient shipmates. I employed the occasional gleams of clear weather in rambling over the old French and Spanish quarters, riding on the Lafayette Railroad or driving out the Shell Road to the cemetery, where the dead are buried above ground. The French part of the city is unique and interesting. All the innovation is confined to the American Municipalities, which resemble the business parts of our Northern cities. The curious one-storied dwellings, with jealousies and tiled roofs, of the last century, have not been disturbed in the region below Canal street. The low houses, where the oleander and crape myrtle still look over the walls, were once inhabited by the luxurious French planters, but now display such signs as "Magazin des Modes," "Au bon marché," or "Perrot, Coiffeur." Some of the more pretending mansions show the *porte cochère* and heavy barred windows of the hotels of Paris, and the common taverns, with their smoky aspect and the blue blouses that fill them, are exact counterparts of some I have seen in the Rue St. Antoine. The body of the Cathedral, standing at the head of the Place d'Armes, was torn down, and workmen were employed in building a prison in its stead; but the front, with its venerable tower and

refreshing appearance of antiquity, will remain, hiding behind its changeless face far different passions and darker spectacles than in the Past.

The hour of departure at length arrived. The levee opposite our anchorage, in Lafayette City, was thronged with a noisy multitude, congregated to witness the embarkation of a hundred and fifty additional passengers. Our deck became populous with tall, gaunt Mississipians and Arkansans, Missouri squatters who had pulled up their stakes yet another time, and an ominous number of professed gamblers. All were going to seek their fortunes in California, but very few had any definite idea of the country or the voyage to be made before reaching it. There were among them some new varieties of the American—long, loosely-jointed men, with large hands and feet and limbs which would still be awkward, whatever the fashion of their clothes. Their faces were lengthened, deeply sallow, overhung by straggling locks of straight black hair, and wore an expression of settled melancholy. The corners of their mouths curved downwards, the upper lip drawn slightly over the under one, giving to the lower part of the face that cast of destructiveness peculiar to the Indian. These men chewed tobacco at a ruinous rate, and spent their time either in lozing at full length on the deck or going into the fore-cabin for 'drinks.' Each one of them carried arms enough for a small company and breathed defiance to all foreigners.

We had a voyage of seven days, devoid of incident, to the Isthmus. During the fourth night we passed between Cuba and Yucatan. Then, after crossing the mouth of the Gulf of Honduras, where we met the south-eastern trades, and running the gauntlet of a cluster of coral keys, for the navigation of which no chart can be positively depended upon, we came into the deep

water of the Caribbean Sea. The waves ran high under a dull rain and raw wind, more like Newfoundland weather than the tropics. On the morning of the eighth day, we approached land. All hands gathered on deck, peering into the mist for the first glimpse of the Isthmus. Suddenly a heavy rain-cloud lifted, and we saw, about five miles distant, the headland of Porto Bello—a bold, rocky promontory, fringed with vegetation and washed at its foot by a line of snowy breakers. The range of the Andes of Darien towered high behind the coast, the further summits lost in the rain. Turning to the south-west, we followed the magnificent sweep of hills toward Chagres, passing Navy Bay, the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Railroad. The entrance is narrow, between two bold bluffs, opening into a fine land-locked harbor, surrounded by hills.

Chagres lies about eight miles to the west of this bay, but the mouth of the river is so narrow that the place is not seen till you run close upon it. The eastern shore is high and steep, cloven with ravines which roll their floods of tropical vegetation down to the sea. The old castle of San Lorenzo crowns the point, occupying a position somewhat similar to the Moro Castle at Havana, and equally impregnable. Its brown battlements and embrasures have many a dark and stirring recollection. Morgan and his buccaneers scaled its walls, took and leveled it, after a fight in which all but thirty-three out of three hundred and fourteen defenders were slain, some of them leaping madly from the precipice into the sea. Strong as it is by nature, and would be in the hands of an enterprising people, it now looks harmless enough with a few old cannon lying lazily on its ramparts. The other side of the river is flat and marshy, and from our place of anchorage we could only see the tops of some huts among the trees.

We came to anchor about half past four. The deck was already covered with luggage and everybody was anxious to leave first. Our captain, clerk, and a bearer of dispatches, were pulled ashore in the steamer's boat, and in the meantime the passengers formed themselves into small companies for the journey up the river. An immense canoe, or "dug-out," manned by half-naked natives shortly came out, and the most of the companies managed to get agents on board to secure canoes for them. The clerk, on his return, was assailed by such a storm of questions—the passengers leaning half-way over the bulwarks in their eagerness for news—that for a few minutes he could not make himself heard. When the clamor subsided, he told us that the Pacific steamer would sail from Panama on the 1st of August, and that the only canoes to be had that night were already taken by Captain Hartstein, who was then making his way up the Rio Chagres, in rain and thick darkness. The trunks and blankets were therefore taken below again and we resigned ourselves to another night on board, with a bare chance of sleep in the disordered state-rooms and among the piles of luggage. A heavy cloud on the sea broke out momentarily into broad scarlet flashes of lightning, surpassing any celestial pyrotechnics I ever witnessed. The dark walls of San Lorenzo, the brilliant clusters of palms on the shore and the green, rolling hills of the interior, leaped at intervals out of the gloom, as vividly seen as under the noon-day sun.

CHAPTER II.

CROSSING THE ISTHMUS.

I LEFT the Falcon at day-break in the ship's boat. We rounded the high bluff on which the castle stands and found beyond it a shallow little bay, on the eastern side of which, on low ground, stand the cane huts of Chagres. Piling up our luggage on the shore, each one set about searching for the canoes which had been engaged the night previous, but, without a single exception, the natives were not to be found, or when found, had broken their bargains. Everybody ran hither and thither in great excitement, anxious to be off before everybody else, and hurrying the naked boatmen, all to no purpose. The canoes were beached on the mud, and their owners engaged in re-thatching their covers with split leaves of the palm. The doors of the huts were filled with men and women, each in a single cotton garment, composedly smoking their cigars, while numbers of children, in Nature's own clothing, tumbled about in the sun. Having started without breakfast, I went to the "Crescent City" Hotel, a hut with a floor to it, but could get nothing. Some of my friends had fared better at one of the native huts, and I sat down to the remains of their meal, which was spread on a hen-coop beside the door. The pigs of the vicinity and several lean dogs surrounded me to offer their

services, but maintained a respectful silence, which is more than could be said of pigs at home. Some pieces of pork fat, with fresh bread and a draught of sweet spring water from a cocoa shell, made me a delicious repast.

A returning Californian had just reached the place, with a box containing \$22,000 in gold-dust, and a four-pound lump in one hand. The impatience and excitement of the passengers, already at a high pitch, was greatly increased by his appearance. Life and death were small matters compared with immediate departure from Chagres. Men ran up and down the beach, shouting, gesticulating, and getting feverishly impatient at the deliberate habits of the natives; as if their arrival in California would thereby be at all hastened. The boatmen, knowing very well that two more steamers were due the next day, remained provokingly cool and unconcerned. They had not seen six months of emigration without learning something of the American habit of going at full speed. The word of starting in use on the Chagres River, is "go-ahead!" Captain C—— and Mr. M——, of Baltimore, and myself, were obliged to pay \$15 each, for a canoe to Cruces. We chose a broad, trimly-cut craft, which the boatmen were covering with fresh thatch. We stayed with them until all was ready, and they had pushed it through the mud and shoal water to the bank before Ramos's house. Our luggage was stowed away, we took our seats and raised our umbrellas, but the men had gone off for provisions and were not to be found. All the other canoes were equally in limbo. The sun blazed down on the swampy shores, and visions of yellow fever came into the minds of the more timid travelers. The native boys brought to us bottles of fresh water, biscuits and fruit, presenting them with the words: "bit!" "pi cayune!" "Your bread is not good," I said to one of the shirt

less traders "Si, Señor!" was his decided answer, while he tossed back his childish head with a look of offended dignity which charmed me. While sitting patiently in our craft, I was much diverted by seeing one of our passengers issue from a hut with a native on each arm, and march them resolutely down to the river. Our own men appeared towards noon, with a bag of rice and dried pork, and an armful of sugar-cane. A few strokes of their broad paddles took us from the excitement and noise of the landing-place to the seclusion and beauty of the river scenery.

Our chief boatman, named Ambrosio Mendez, was of the mixed Indian and Spanish race. The second, Juan Crispin Bega, belonged to the lowest class, almost entirely of negro blood. He was a strong, jovial fellow, and took such good care of some of our small articles as to relieve us from all further trouble about them. This propensity is common to all of his caste on the Isthmus. In addition to these, a third man was given to us, with the assurance that he would work his passage; but just as we were leaving, we learned that he was a runaway soldier, who had been taken up for theft and was released on paying some sub-alcalde three bottles of liquor, promising to quit the place at once. We were scarcely out of sight of the town before he demanded five dollars a day for his labor. We refused, and he stopped working. Upon our threatening to set him ashore in the jungle, he took up the paddle, but used it so awkwardly and perversely that our other men lost all patience. We were obliged, however, to wait until we could reach Gatun, ten miles distant, before settling matters. Juan struck up "Oh Susanna!" which he sang to a most ludicrous imitation of the words, and I lay back under the palm leaves, looking out of the stern of the canoe on the forests of the Chagres River

There is nothing in the world comparable to these forests. No description that I have ever read conveys an idea of the splendid overplus of vegetable life within the tropics. The river, broad, and with a swift current of the sweetest water I ever drank, winds between walls of foliage that rise from its very surface. All the gorgeous growths of an eternal Summer are so mingled in one impenetrable mass, that the eye is bewildered. From the rank jungle of canes and gigantic lilies, and the thickets of strange shrubs that line the water, rise the trunks of the mango, the ceiba, the cocoa, the sycamore and the superb palm. Plaintains take root in the banks, hiding the soil with their leaves, shaken and split into immense plumes by the wind and rain. The zapote, with a fruit the size of a man's head, the gourd tree, and other vegetable wonders, attract the eye on all sides. Blossoms of crimson, purple and yellow, of a form and magnitude unknown in the North, are mingled with the leaves, and flocks of paroquets and brilliant butterflies circle through the air like blossoms blown away. Sometimes a spike of scarlet flowers is thrust forth like the tongue of a serpent from the heart of some convolution of unfolding leaves, and often the creepers and parasites drop trails and streamers of fragrance from boughs that shoot half-way across the river. Every turn of the stream only disclosed another and more magnificent vista of leaf, bough and blossom. All outline of the landscape is lost under this deluge of vegetation. No trace of the soil is to be seen ; lowland and highland are the same ; a mountain is but a higher swell of the mass of verdure. As on the ocean, you have a sense rather than a perception of beauty. The sharp clear lines of our scenery at home are here wanting. What shape the land would be if cleared, you cannot tell. You gaze upon the scene before you with a never-sated delight, till your

brain aches with the sensation, and you close your eyes, overwhelmed with the thought that all these wonders have been from the beginning—that year after year takes away no leaf or blossom that is not replaced, but the sublime mystery of growth and decay is renewed forever.

In the afternoon we reached Gatun, a small village of bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaves, on the right bank of the river. The canoes which preceded us had already stopped, and the boatmen, who have a mutual understanding, had decided to remain all night. We ejected our worthless passenger on landing, notwithstanding his passive resistance, and engaged a new boatman in his place, at \$8. I shall never forget the forlorn look of the man as he sat on the bank beside his bag of rice, as the rain began to fall. Ambrosio took us to one of the huts and engaged hammocks for the night. Two wooden drums, beaten by boys, in another part of the village, gave signs of a coming fandango, and as it was Sunday night, all the natives were out in their best dresses. They are a very cleanly people, bathing daily, and changing their dresses as often as they are soiled. The children have their heads shaved from the crown to the neck, and as they go about naked, with abdomens unnaturally distended, from an exclusive vegetable diet, are odd figures enough. They have bright black eyes, and are quick and intelligent in their speech and motions.

The inside of our hut was but a single room, in which all the household operations were carried on. A notched pole, serving as a ladder, led to a sleeping loft, under the pyramidal roof of thatch. Here a number of the emigrants who arrived late were stowed away on a rattling floor of cane, covered with hides. After a supper of pork and coffee, I made my day's notes by the light

of a miserable starveling candle, stuck in an empty bottle, but had not written far before my paper was covered with fleas. The owner of the hut swung my hammock meanwhile, and I turned in to secure it for the night. To lie there was one thing, to sleep another. A dozen natives crowded round the table, drinking their aguardiente and disputing vehemently ; the cooking fire was on one side of me, and every one that passed to and fro was sure to give me a thump, while my weight swung the hammock so low, that all the dogs on the premises were constantly rubbing their backs under me. I was just sinking into a doze, when my head was so violently agitated that I started up in some alarm. It was but a quarrel about payment between the Señora and a boatman, one standing on either side. From their angry gestures, my own head and not the reckoning, seemed the subject of contention.

Our men were to have started at midnight, but it was two hours later before we could rouse and muster them together. We went silently and rapidly up the river till sunrise, when we reached a cluster of huts called Dos Hermanos (Two Brothers.) Here we overtook two canoes, which, in their anxiety to get ahead, had been all night on the river. There had been only a slight shower since we started ; but the clouds began to gather heavily, and by the time we had gained the ranche of Palo Matida a sudden cold wind came over the forests, and the air was at once darkened. We sprang ashore and barely reached the hut, a few paces off, when the rain broke over us, as if the sky had caved in. A dozen lines of white electric heat ran down from the zenith, followed by crashes of thunder, which I could feel throbbing in the earth under my feet. The rain drove into one side of the cabin and out the other, but we wrapped ourselves in India-rubber cloth and kept out the wet and chilling air. During the whole day the river rose

rapidly and we were obliged to hug the bank closely, running under the boughs of trees and drawing ourselves up the rapids by those that hung low.

I crept out of the snug nest where we were all stowed as closely as three unfledged sparrows, and took my seat between Juan and Ambrosio, protected from the rain by an India-rubber poncho. The clothing of our men was likewise waterproof, but without seam or fold. It gave no hindrance to the free play of their muscles, as they deftly and rapidly plied the broad paddles. Juan kept time to the Ethiopian melodies he had picked up from the emigrants, looking round from time to time with a grin of satisfaction at his skill. I preferred, however, hearing the native songs, which the boatmen sing with a melancholy drawl on the final syllable of every line, giving the music a peculiar but not unpleasant effect, when heard at a little distance. There was one, in particular, which he sang with some expression, the refrain running thus :

“ Ten piedad, piedad de mis penas,

Ten piedad, piedad de mi amor !”

(Have pity on my sufferings—have pity on my love !)

Singing begets thirst, and perhaps Juan sang the more that he might have a more frequent claim on the brandy. The bottle was then produced and each swallowed a mouthful, after which he dipped his cocoa shell in the river and took a long draught. This is a universal custom among the boatmen, and the traveler is obliged to supply them. As a class, they are faithful, hard-working and grateful for kindness. They have faults, the worst of which are tardiness, and a propensity to filch small articles ; but good treatment wins upon them in almost every case. Juan

said to me in the beginning "*soy tu amigo yo,*" (*Americanist*: I am thy friend, *well* I am,) but when he asked me, in turn, for every article of clothing I wore, I began to think his friendship not the most disinterested. Ambrosio told me that they would serve no one well who treated them badly. "If the Americans are good, we are good; if they abuse us, we are bad. We are black, but *muchos caballeros,*" (very much of gentlemen,) said he. Many blustering fellows, with their belts stuck full of pistols and bowie-knives, which they draw on all occasions, but take good care not to use, have brought reproach on the country by their silly conduct. It is no bravery to put a revolver to the head of an unarmed and ignorant native, and the boatmen have sense enough to be no longer terrified by it.

We stopped the second night at Peña Blanca, (the White Rock,) where I slept in the loft of a hut, on the floor, in the midst of the family and six other travelers. We started at sunrise, hoping to reach Gorgona the same night, but ran upon a sunken log and were detained some time. Ambrosio finally released us by jumping into the river and swimming ashore with a rope in his teeth. The stream was very high, running at least five miles an hour, and we could only stem it with great labor. We passed the ranches of Agua Salud, Varro Colorado and Palanquilla, and shortly after were overtaken by a storm on the river. We could hear the rush and roar of the rain, as it came towards us like the trampling of myriad feet on the leaves. Shooting under a broad sycamore we made fast to the boughs, covered ourselves with India-rubber, and lay under our cool, rustling thatch of palm, until the storm had passed over.

The character of the scenery changed somewhat as we advanced. The air was purer, and the banks more bold and steep.

The country showed more signs of cultivation, and in many places the forest had been lopped away to make room for fields of maize, plantain and rice. But the vegetation was still that of the tropics and many were the long and lonely reaches of the river where we glided between piled masses of bloom and greenery. I remember one spot, where, from the crest of a steep hill to the edge of the water, descended a flood, a torrent of vegetation. Trees were rolled upon trees, woven into a sheet by parasitic vines, that leaped into the air like spray, from the topmost boughs. When a wind slightly agitated the sea of leaves, and the vines were flung like a green foam on the surface of the river, it was almost impossible not to feel that the flood was about rushing down to overwhelm us.

We stopped four hours short of Gorgona, at the hacienda of San Pablo, the residence of Padre Dutaris, curé of all the interior. Ambrosio took us to his house by a path across a rolling, open savanna, dotted by palms and acacias of immense size. Herds of cattle and horses were grazing on the short, thick-leaved grass, and appeared to be in excellent condition. The padre owns a large tract of land, with a thousand head of stock, and his ranche commands a beautiful view up and down the river. Ambrosio was acquainted with his wife, and by recommending us as *buenos caballeros*, procured us a splendid supper of fowls, eggs, rice boiled in cocoa milk, and chocolate, with baked plantains for bread. Those who came after us had difficulty in getting anything. The padre had been frequently cheated by Americans and was therefore cautious. He was absent at the time, but his son Felipe, a boy of twelve years old, assisted in doing the honors with wonderful grace and self-possession. His tawny skin was as soft as velvet, and his black eyes sparkled like jewels. He is

almost the only living model of the Apollino that I ever saw. He sat in the hammock with me, leaning over my shoulder as I noted down the day's doings, and when I had done, wrote his name in my book, in an elegant hand. I slept soundly in the midst of an uproar, and only awoke at four o'clock next morning, to hurry our men in leaving for Gorgona.

The current was very strong and in some places it was almost impossible to make headway. Our boatmen worked hard, and by dint of strong poling managed to jump through most difficult places. Their naked, sinewy forms, bathed in sweat, shone like polished bronze. Ambrosio was soon exhausted, and lay down; but Miguel, our *corps de reserve*, put his agile spirit into the work and flung himself upon the pole with such vigor that all the muscles of his body quivered as the boat shot ahead and relaxed them. About half-way to Gorgona we rounded the foot of Monte Carabali, a bold peak clothed with forests and crowned with a single splendid palm. This hill is the only one in the province from which both oceans may be seen at once.

As we neared Gorgona, our men began repeating the ominous words: "*Cruces—mucha colera.*" We had, in fact, already heard of the prevalence of cholera there, but doubted, none the less, their wish to shorten the journey. On climbing the bank to the village, I called immediately at the store of Mr. Miller, the only American resident, who informed me that several passengers by the Falcon had already left for Panama, the route being reported passable. In the door of the alcalde's house, near at hand, I met Mr. Powers, who had left New York a short time previous to my departure, and was about starting for Panama on foot, mules being very scarce. While we were deliberating whether to go on to Cruces, Ambrosio beckoned me into an adjoining hut

The owner, a very venerable and dignified native, received me swinging in his hammock. He had six horses which he would furnish us the next morning, at \$10 the head for riding animals, and \$6 for each 100 lbs. of freight. The bargain was instantly concluded.

Now came the settlement with our boatmen. In addition to the fare, half of which was paid in Chagres, we had promised them a *gratificacion*, provided they made the voyage in three days. The contract was not exactly fulfilled, but we thought it best to part friends and so gave them each a dollar. Their antics of delight were most laughable. They grinned, laughed, danced, caught us by the hands, vowed eternal friendship and would have embraced us outright, had we given them the least encouragement. Half an hour afterwards I met Juan, in a clean shirt and white pantaloons. There was a heat in his eye and a ruddiness under his black skin, which readily explained a little incoherence in his speech. "*Mi amigo!*" he cried, "*mi buen amigo!* give me a bottle of beer!" I refused. "But," said he, "we are friends; surely you will give your dear friend a bottle of beer." "I don't like my dear friends to drink too much;" I answered. Finding I would not humor him, as a last resort, he placed both hands on his breast, and with an imploring look, sang:

"Ten piedad, piedad de mis penas,
Ten piedad, piedad de mi amor!"

I burst into a laugh at this comical appeal, and he retreated, satisfied that he had at least done a smart thing.

During the afternoon a number of canoes arrived, and as it grew dark the sound of the wooden drums proclaimed a *fan-lang*

The aristocracy of Gorgona met in the Alcalde's house; the plebs on a level sward before one of the huts. The dances were the same, but there was some attempt at style by the former class. The ladies were dressed in white and pink, with flowers in their hair, and waltzed with a slow grace to the music of violins and guitars. The Alcalde's daughters were rather pretty, and at once became favorites of the Americans, some of whom joined in the fandango, and went through its voluptuous mazes at the first trial, to the great delight of the natives. The Señora Catalina, a rich widow, of pure Andalusian blood, danced charmingly. Her little head was leaned coquettishly on one side, while with one hand she held aloft the fringed end of a crimson scarf, which rested lightly on the opposite shoulder. The dance over, she took a guitar and sang, the subject of her song being "*los amigos Americanos*." There was less sentiment, but more jollity, at the dances on the grass. The only accompaniment to the wooden drums was the "*ña. ña. ña*," of the women, a nasal monotone, which few ears have nerve to endure. Those who danced longest and with the most voluptuous spirit, had the hats of all the others piled upon them, in token of applause. These half-barbaric orgies were fully seen in the pure and splendid light poured upon the landscape from a vertical moon.

Next morning at daybreak our horses—tough little mustangs, which I could almost step over—were at the door. We started off with a guide, trusting our baggage to the honesty of our host, who promised to send it the same day. A servant of the Alcalde escorted us out of the village, cut us each a good stick, pocketed a real and then left us to plunge into the forests. The path at the outset was bad enough, but as the wood grew deeper and darker and the tough clay soil held the rains which had fallen, it

became finally a narrow gully, filled with mud nearly to our horses bellies. Descending the steep sides of the hills, they would step or slide down almost precipitous passes, bringing up all straight at the bottom, and climbing the opposite sides like cats. So strong is their mutual confidence that they invariably step in each other's tracks, and a great part of the road is thus worn into holes three feet deep and filled with water and soft mud, which spirts upward as they go, coating the rider from head to foot.

The mountain range in the interior is broken and irregular. The road passes over the lower ridges and projecting spurs of the main chain, covered nearly the whole distance to Panama by dense forests. Above us spread a roof of transparent green, through which few rays of the sunlight fell. The only sounds in that leafy wilderness were the chattering of monkeys as they cracked the palm-nuts, and the scream of parrots, flying from tree to tree. In the deepest ravines spent mules frequently lay dead, and high above them, on the large boughs, the bald vultures waited silently for us to pass. We overtook many trains of luggage, packed on the backs of bulls and horses, tied head-to-tail in long files. At intervals, on the road, we saw a solitary ranche, with a cleared space about it, but all the natives could furnish us was a cup of thick, black coffee.

After ascending for a considerable distance, in the first half of our journey, we came to a level table-land, covered with palms, with a higher ridge beyond it. Our horses climbed it with some labor, went down the other side through clefts and gulches which seemed impassable, and brought us to a stream of milky blue water, which, on ascertaining its course with a compass, I found to be a tributary of the Rio Grande, flowing into the Pacific at Panama. We now hoped the worst part of our route was over,

but this was a terrible deception. Scrambling up ravines of slippery clay, we went for miles through swamps and thickets, urging forward our jaded beasts by shouting and beating. Going down a precipitous bank, washed soft by the rains, my horse slipped and made a descent of ten feet, landing on one bank and I on another. He rose quietly, disengaged his head from the mud and stood, flank-deep, waiting till I stepped across his back and went forward, my legs lifted to his neck. This same adventure happened several times to each of us on the passage across.

As we were leaving Gorgona, our party was joined by a large Mississippian, whose face struck me at the first glance as being peculiarly cadaverous. He attached himself to us without the least ceremony, leaving his own party behind. We had not ridden far before he told us he had felt symptoms of cholera during the night, and was growing worse. We insisted on his returning to Gorgona at once, but he refused, saying he was "bound to go through." At the first ranche on the road we found another traveler, lying on the ground in a state of entire prostration. He was attended by a friend, who seemed on the point of taking the epidemic, from his very fears. The sight of this case no doubt operated on the Mississippian, for he soon became so racked with pain as to keep his seat with great difficulty. We were alarmed; it was impossible to stop in the swampy forest, and equally impossible to leave him, now that all his dependence was on us. The only thing resembling medicine in our possession, was a bottle of claret. It was an unusual remedy for cholera, but he insisted on drinking it.

After urging forward our weary beasts till late in the afternoon, we were told that Panama was four hours further. We pitied the poor horses, but ourselves more, and determined to push ahead. After a repetition of all our worst experience, we finally struck

the remains of the paved road constructed by the buccaneers when they held Panama. I now looked eagerly forward for the Pacific, but every ridge showed another in advance, and it grew dark with a rain coming up. Our horses avoided the hard pavement and took by-paths through thickets higher than our heads. The cholera-stricken emigrant, nothing helped by the claret he drank, implored us, amid his groans, to hasten forward. Leaning over the horse's neck, he writhed on his saddle in an agony of pain, and seemed on the point of falling at every step. We were far in advance of our Indian guide and lost the way more than once in the darkness. At last he overtook us, washed his feet in a mud-hole, and put on a pair of pantaloons. This was a welcome sign to us, and in fact, we soon after smelt the salt air of the Pacific, and could distinguish huts on either side of the road. These gave place to stone houses and massive ruined edifices, overgrown with vegetation. We passed a plaza and magnificent church, rode down an open space fronting the bay, under a heavy gate-way, across another plaza and through two or three narrow streets, hailed by Americans all the way with: "Are you the Falcon's passengers?" "From Gorgona?" "From Cruces?" till our guide brought us up at the Hotel Americano.

Thus terminated my five days' journey across the Isthmus—decidedly more novel, grotesque and adventurous than any trip of similar length in the world. It was rough enough, but had nothing that I could exactly call hardship, so much was the fatigue balanced by the enjoyment of unsurpassed scenery and a continual sensation of novelty. In spite of the many dolorous accounts which have been sent from the Isthmus, there is nothing, at the worst season, to deter any one from the journey.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES IN PANAMA.

I SAW less of Panama than I could have wished. A few hasty rambles through its ruined convents and colleges and grass-grown plazas—a stroll on its massive battlements, lumbered with idle cannon, of the splendid bronze of Barcelona—were all that I could accomplish in the short stay of a day and a half. Its situation at the base of a broad, green mountain, with the sea washing three sides of the narrow promontory on which it is built, is highly picturesque, yet some other parts of the bay seem better fitted for the purposes of commerce. Vessels of heavy draught cannot anchor within a mile and a half of the city, and there is but one point where embarkation, even in the shallow “dug-outs” of the natives, is practicable. The bottom of the bay is a bed of rock, which, at low tide, lies bare far out beyond the ramparts. The south-eastern shore of the bay belongs to the South-American Continent, and the range of lofty mountains behind it is constantly wreathed with light clouds, or shrouded from view by the storms which it attracts. To the west the green islands of Taboga, and others, rise behind one another, interrupting the blue curve of the watery horizon. The city was already half American. The native boys whistled Yankee Doodle through the streets, and Se

fronts of the pure Castilian blood sang the Ethiopian melodies of Virginia to their guitars. Nearly half the faces seen were American, and the signs on shops of all kinds appeared in our language. On the morning after I arrived, I heard a sudden rumbling in the streets, and observing a general rush to the windows, followed the crowd in time to see the first cart made in Panama—the work of a Yankee mechanic, detained for want of money to get further.

We found the hotels doing a thriving business, though the fare and attendance were alike indifferent. We went to bed, immediately after reaching the Hotel Americano, that our clothes might be washed before morning, as our luggage had not arrived. Nearly all the passengers were in a similar predicament. Some ladies, who had ridden over from Cruces in male attire, a short time previous, were obliged to sport their jackets and pantaloons several days before receiving their dresses. Our trust in the venerable native at Gorgona was not disappointed; the next morning his mule was at the door, laden with our trunks and valises. Some of the passengers, however, were obliged to remain in Panama another month, since, notwithstanding the formal contract of the Alcalde of Gorgona, their luggage did not arrive before the sailing of the steamer.

The next day nearly all of our passengers came in. There had been a heavy rain during the night, and the Gorgona road, already next to impassable, became actually perilous. A lady from Maine, who made the journey alone, was obliged to ford a torrent of water above her waist, with a native on each side, to prevent her from being carried away. A French lady who crossed was washed from her mule, and only got over by the united exertions of seven men.

The roads from Cruces and Gorgona enter on the eastern side of the city, as well as the line of the railroad survey. The latter, after leaving Limon Bay, runs on the north side of the Chagres River till it reaches Gorgona, continuing thence to Panama in the same general course as the mule route. It will probably be extended down the Bay to some point opposite the island of Taboga, which is marked out by Nature as the future anchorage ground and dépôt of all the lines touching at Panama. The engineers of the survey accomplished a great work in fixing the route within so short a space of time. The obstacles to be overcome can scarcely be conceived by one who has never seen tropical vegetation or felt tropical rains. The greatest difficulty in constructing the road is the want of stone, though this is in some degree supplied by abundance of *lignum-vitæ* and other durable wood. The torrents of rain during the summer season will require the side-hill cuttings to be made of unusual strength. The estimated cost of the road appears small, especially when the value of labor is taken into consideration. The natives are not to be depended on, and there is some risk in taking men from the United States half way to California.

Panama is one of the most picturesque cities on the American Continent. Its ruins—if those could be called ruins which were never completed edifices—and the seaward view from its ramparts, on a bright morning, would ravish the eye of an artist. Although small in limit, old and terribly dilapidated, its situation and surroundings are of unsurpassable beauty. There is one angle of the walls where you can look out of a cracked watch-tower on the sparkling swells of the Pacific, ridden by flocks of snow-white pelicans and the rolling canoes of the natives—where your vision, following the entire curve of the Gulf, takes in on

either side nearly a hundred miles of shore. The ruins of the Jesuit Church of San Felipe, through which I was piloted by my friend, Lieutenant Beale, reminded me of the Baths of Caracalla. The majestic arches spanning the nave are laden with a wilderness of shrubbery and wild vines which fall like a fringe to the very floor. The building is roofless, but daylight can scarcely steal in through the embowering leaves. Several bells, of a sweet, silvery ring, are propped up by beams, in a dark corner, but from the look of the place, ages seem to have passed since they called the crafty brotherhood to the *oracion*. A splendid College, left incomplete many years ago fronts on one of the plazas. Its Corinthian pillars and pilasters of red sandstone are broken and crumbling, and from the crevices at their base spring luxuriant bananas, shooting their large leaves through the windows and folding them around the columns of the gateway.

There were about seven hundred emigrants waiting for passage, when I reached Panama. All the tickets the steamer could possibly receive had been issued and so great was the anxiety to get on, that double price, \$600, was frequently paid for a ticket to San Francisco. A few days before we came, there was a most violent excitement on the subject, and as the only way to terminate the dispute, it was finally agreed to dispose by lot of all the tickets for sale. The emigrants were all numbered, and those with tickets for sailing vessels or other steamers excluded. The remainder then drew, there being fifty-two tickets to near three hundred passengers. This quieted the excitement for the time, though there was still a continual under-current of speculation and intrigue which was curious to observe. The disappointed candidates, for the most part, took passage in sailing vessels, with a prospect of seventy days' voyage before them. A few months

previous, when three thousand persons were waiting on the Isthmus, several small companies started in the log canoes of the natives, thinking to reach San Francisco in them ! After a voyage of forty days, during which they went no further than the Island of Quibo, at the mouth of the Gulf, nearly all of them returned ; the rest have not since been heard of.

The passengers were engaged in embarking all the afternoon of the second day after my arrival. The steamer came up to within a mile and a half of the town, and numbers of canoes plied between her and the sea-gateway. Native porters crowded about the hotels, clamoring for luggage, which they carried down to the shore under so fervent a heat that I was obliged to hoist my umbrella. One of the boatmen lifted me over the swells for the sake of a *medio*, and I was soon gliding out along the edge of the breakers, startling the pelicans that flew in long lines over the water. I was well satisfied to leave Panama at the time ; the cholera, which had already carried off one-fourth of the native population, was making havoc among the Americans, and several of the Falcon's passengers lay at the point of death

CHAPTER IV.

THE PACIFIC COAST OF MEXICO.

THE following morning, at eleven o'clock, the last canoe-load of mails came on board. Ten minutes afterwards our parting gun was fired, and its echoes had not died away when the paddles were in motion and the boat heading for Taboga. We ran past several steep volcanic islands, matted in foliage, and in an hour came to before Taboga, which is to Panama what Capri is to Naples, only that it is far more beautiful. In the deep and secure roadstead one may throw a stone from the ship's deck to the gardens of orange and tamarind fringing the beach. The village lies beside a cocoa grove in a sheltered corner, at the foot of hills which rise in terraces of luxuriant vegetation to the height of a thousand feet. The mass of palm, cocoa, banana and orange trees is unbroken from the summit to the water's edge. The ravine behind the village contains an unfailing spring of sweet water, from which all vessels touching at Panama are supplied. The climate is delightful and perfectly healthy.

The steamer Oregon was lying high and dry on the beach, undergoing repairs, having injured her keel by running on a rock during the voyage down. The remarkable adaptation of Taboga for a dry dock was shown by the fact that while at high tide the

Oregon floated, at low tide one might walk around her on dry ground ; by building two walls and a gate 'n front, the dry dock would be complete. This is the only place between Cape Horn and San Francisco where such a thing is possible. These unrivaled advantages, as well as the healthiness of Taboga and its splendid scenery, point it out as the stopping-place for steamers and passengers, if not the commercial dépôt of this part of the Pacific.

A voyage from Panama to San Francisco in the year 1849, can hardly be compared to sea-life in any other part of the world or at any previous period. Our vessel was crowded fore and aft : exercise was rendered quite impossible and sleep was each night a new experiment, for the success of which we were truly grateful. We were roused at daylight by the movements on deck, if not earlier, by the breaking of a hammock-rope and the thump and yell of the unlucky sleeper. Coffee was served in the cabin ; but, as many of the passengers imagined that, because they had paid a high price for their tickets, they were conscientiously obligated to drink three cups, the late-comers got a very scanty allowance. The breakfast hour was nine, and the table was obliged to be fully set twice. At the first tingle of the bell, all hands started as if a shot had exploded among them ; conversation was broken off in the middle of a word ; the deck was instantly cleared, and the passengers, tumbling pell-mell down the cabin-stairs, found every seat taken by others who had probably been sitting in them for half an hour. The bell, however, had an equally convulsive effect upon these. There was a confused grabbing motion for a few seconds, and lo ! the plates were cleared. A chicken parted in twain as if by magic, each half leaping into an opposite plate, a dish of sweet potatoes vanished before a single hand ; beefsteak

flew in all directions ; and while about half the passengers had all their breakfast piled at once upon their plates, the other half were regaled by a " plentiful lack." The second table was but a repetition of these scenes, which dinner—our only additional meal—renewed in the afternoon. To prevent being driven, in self-defence, into the degrading habit, eight of us secured one end of the second table, shut off by the mizen-mast from the long arms that might otherwise have grabbed our share. Among our company of two hundred and fifty, there were, of course, many gentlemen of marked refinement and intelligence from various parts of the Union—enough, probably, to leaven the large lump of selfishness and blackguardism into which we were thrown. I believe the controlling portion of the California emigration is intelligent, orderly and peaceable ; yet I never witnessed so many disgusting exhibitions of the lowest passions of humanity, as during the voyage. At sea or among the mountains, men completely lose the little arts of dissimulation they practise in society. They show in their true light, and very often, alas ! in a light little calculated to encourage the enthusiastic believer in the speedy perfection of our race.

The day after leaving Panama we were in sight of the promontory of Veraguas and the island of Quibo, off Central America. It is a grand coast, with mountain ranges piercing the clouds. Then, for several days, we gave the continent a wide berth, our course making a chord to the arc of the Gulf of Tehuantepec. The sea was perfectly tranquil, and we were not molested by the inexorable demon that lodges in the stomachs of landmen. Why has never a word been said or sung about sunset on the Pacific ? Nowhere on this earth can one be over-vaulted with such a glory of colors. The sky, with a ground-hue of rose towards the west and purple towards the east, is mottled

and flecked over all its surface with light clouds, running through every shade of crimson, amber, violet and russet-gold. There is no dead duskiness opposite the sunken sun ; the whole vast shell of the firmament glows with an equal radiance, reduplicating its hues on the glassy sea, so that we seem floating in a hollow sphere of prismatic crystal. The cloud-strata, at different heights in the air, take different coloring ; through bars of burning carmine one may look on the soft, rose-purple folds of an inner curtain, and, far within and beyond that, on the clear amber-green of the immaculate sky. As the light diminishes, these radiant vapors sink and gather into flaming pyramids, between whose pinnacles the serene depth of air is of that fathomless violet-green which we see in the skies of Titian.

The heat, during this part of the voyage, was intolerable. The thermometer ranged from 82° to 84° at night, and 86° to 90° by day—a lower temperature than we frequently feel in the North, but attended by an enervating languor such as I never before experienced. Under its influence one's energies flag, active habits of mind are thrown aside, the imagination grows faint and hazy, the very feelings and sensibilities are melted and weakened. Once, I panted for the heat and glare and splendid luxuriance of tropical lands, till I almost made the god of the Persians my own. I thought some southern star must have been in the ascendant at my birth, some glowing instinct of the South been infused into my nature. Two months before, the thought of riding on that summer sea, with the sun over the mast-head, would have given a delicious glow to my fancy. But all my vision of life in the tropics vanished before the apathy engendered by this heat. The snowy, bleak and sublime North beckoned me like a mirage over the receding seas. Gods ! how a single sought

of keen north-west wind down some mountain gorge would have beaten a march of exulting energy to my spirit! how my veins would have tingled to the sound, and my nerves stiffened in the healthy embraces of that ruder air!

After a week of this kind of existence we passed the sun's latitude, and made the mountains of Mexico. The next night we came-to at the entrance of the harbor of Acapulco, while the ship's boat went to the city, some two miles distant. In about two hours it returned, bringing us word that thirty or forty Americans were waiting passage, most of whom were persons who had left Panama in the Humboldt in March, and who had already been three months in port. Captain Bailey determined to take them on board, and the Panama felt her way in through the dark, narrow entrance.

It was midnight. The beautiful mountain-locked basin on which Acapulco is built was dimly visible under the clouded moon, but I could discern on one side the white walls of the Fort on a rocky point, with the trees of the Alameda behind it, and still further the lights of the town glittering along the hill. As we approached the Fort we were hailed, but as a response was not immediately made the light was suddenly extinguished. Some one called out "*fuero! fuero!*" (outside!) and our boat, which had been sent out a second time, returned, stating that a file of soldiers drawn up on the beach had opposed any landing. It was followed by another, with four oars, containing a messenger from the Governor, who announced to us, in good English, that we were not allowed to come so near the town, but must lie off in the channel; the cholera, they had learned, was at Panama, and quarantine regulations had been established at Acapulco. This order was repeated, and the Panama then moved to the other

side of the harbor. The boat, however, came out again, bringing a declaration from the Governor that if we did not instantly fall back to a certain channel between two islands, we should be fired upon. Rather than get into a quarrel with the alarmed authorities or be subjected to delay, we got under way again, and by sunrise were forty miles nearer San Blas.

We had on board a choice gang of blacklegs, among whom were several characters of notoriety in the United States, going out to extend the area of their infernal profession. About a dozen came on from New Orleans by the Falcon and as many from New York by the Crescent City. They established a branch at Panama, immediately on their arrival, and two or three remained to take charge of it. They did not commence very fortunately; their first capital of \$500 having been won in one night by a lucky padre. Most of them, with the devil's luck, drew prizes in the ticket lottery, while worthy men were left behind. After leaving Acapulco, they commenced playing *monte* on the quarter-deck, and would no doubt have entrapped some unwary passengers, had not the Captain put a stop to their operations. These characters have done much, by their conduct on the Isthmus and elsewhere, to earn for us the title of "Northern barbarians," and especially, by wantonly offending the religious sentiment of the natives. I was told of four who entered one of the churches with their hats pulled fast over their brows, and, marching deliberately up the aisle, severally lighted their cigars at the four tapers of the altar. The class was known to all on board and generally shunned.

There is another class of individuals whom I would recommend travelers to avoid. I saw several specimens on the Isthmus. They are miserable, melancholy men, ready to yield up their last

breath at any moment. They left home prematurely, and now humbly acknowledge their error. They were not made for traveling, but they did not know it before. If you would dig a hole and lay them in it, leaving only their heads above ground, they would be perfectly contented. Let them alone; do not ever express your sympathy. Then their self-pity will change to indignation at your cold-heartedness, and they will take care of themselves for very spite.

Our track, now, was along and near the coast—a succession of lofty mountain ranges, rising faint and blue through belts of cloud. Through a glass, they appeared rugged and abrupt, scarred with deep ravines and divided by narrow gorges, yet exhibiting, nearly to their summits, a rich clothing of forests. The shore is iron-bound and lined with breakers, yet there are many small bays and coves which afford shelter to fishing and coasting vessels and support a scanty population. The higher peaks of the inland chain are occasionally seen when the atmosphere is clear. One morning the Volcano of Colima, distant ninety miles “as the bird flies,” came into sight, shooting its forked summits far above the nearer ranges. It is in the province of Jalisco, near Lake Chapala, and is 16,000 feet in height—a greater than Mount Blanc! I was delighted with Cuba and the Isthmus, but forgot them at once when I viewed the grand outline of this coast, the only approach to which is seen in the Maritime Alps, on leaving Genoa.

On the third morning from Acapulco, we saw the lofty group of mountains bounding the roadstead of San Blas on the East. The islands called Las Tres Marias were visible, ten miles distant, on our left. They are too small and scattering to break the heavy seas and “southerners” which come in to the very end of the

bight on which San Blas is built. Vessels of light draught may run across a narrow bar between breakers and find safe anchorage in a little inlet on the northern side, but those which are obliged to lie in the open road are exposed to considerable danger. A high white rock, of singular form, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, serves as a landmark for vessels. The village which is a little larger than Chagres, and like it a collection of cane huts with a few stone houses, lies on one side of the inlet before mentioned, on flat swampy ground, and surrounded by rank forests and jungles. A mile behind it, on a high, precipitous rock, is the Presidio of San Blas, now almost deserted, all business being transacted at the village on shore.

We came-to, a mile from the place, and were soon after visited by the Alcalde, who, after exchanging the ordinary courtesies informed us there were plenty of provisions on shore, and departed, saying nothing of quarantine. A flock of cayucas, paddled by the natives, followed him and swarmed around us, ready to take passengers at three rials apiece. Three or four of us took one of these craft, and were paddled ashore, running on the edge of the breakers which roared and dashed along the mouth of the inlet. We landed on a beach, ankle-deep in sand and covered with mustangs, mules and donkeys, with a sprinkling of natives. Our passengers were busy all over the village, lugging strings of bananas and plantains, buying cool water-jars of porous earth, gathering limes and oranges from the trees, or regaling themselves at the fondas with fresh spring-water, (not always unmixed,) tortillas and fried pork. Several gentlemen who had come overland from Vera Cruz, awaited our arrival, and as the place was very unhealthy they were not long in embarking.

In company with some friends, I set out for the old Presidio

on the cliff The road led through swampy forests till we reached the foot of the ascent. A native passed us, on a sharp-trotting mule : "*Donde va, hombre ?*" "*Tépic,*" was his answer. Up we went, scrambling over loose stones, between banana thickets and flowering shrubs, till we gained a rocky spur near the summit. Here the view to the north, toward Mazatlan, was very fine. Across the marshy plain many leagues in breadth, bordering the sea, we traced the Rio Grande of the West by the groves of sycamore on its banks ; beyond it another lateral chain of the Sierra Madre rose to the clouds. Turning again, we entered a deserted court-yard, fronted by the fort, which had a covered gallery on the inside. The walls were broken down, the deep wells in the rock choked up and the stone pillars and gateways overrun with rank vines. From the parapet, the whole roadstead of San Blas lay at our feet, and our steamer, two miles off, seemed to be within hail.

This plaza opened on another and larger one, completely covered with tall weeds, among which the native pigs rooted and meditated by turns. A fine old church, at the farther end, was going to ruin, and the useless bells still hung in its towers. Some of the houses were inhabited, and we procured from the natives fresh water and delicious bananas. The aspect of the whole place, picturesque in its desolation, impressed me more than anything on the journey, except the church of San Felipe, at Panama. The guns of the Presidio were spiked by Commander Dupont, during the war ; there has been no garrison there for many years.

We descended again, made our purchases of fruit, and reached the beach just as the steamer's gun signalized us to return. The sayuca in which we embarked was a round log, about ten feet long, rolling over the swells with a ticklish facility. We lay flat in

the bottom, not daring to stir hand or foot for fear of losing the exact balance which kept us upright, and finally reached the gangway, where we received a sound cursing from one of the ship's crew for trusting ourselves in such a craft. A dozen thers, pulling for life, came behind us, followed by a launch bringing two live bullocks for our provender. A quarrel broke out between one of our new passengers and a native, in which blows were exchanged. The question was then raised "whether a nigger was as good as a white man," and like the old feuds of the *Bianchi* and the *Neri* in Tuscany, the contest raged fiercely for the rest of the day.

The morning mist rose from the summits of the Sierra Madre of Durango. As we neared Mazatlan, a light smoke was discerned far on our left; and we had not been long in the harbor before the California came rounding in, her passengers cheering us as she passed and dropped anchor between us and the town. She looked somewhat weather-beaten, but was a pleasant sight to our eyes. Conversation was kept up between the two ships so long as they were in hearing, the Panama's passengers inquiring anxiously about the abundance of gold, and the Californians assuring them that it was as plenty as ever.

Few ports present a more picturesque appearance from the sea than Mazatlan. The harbor, or roadstead, open on the west to the unbroken swells of the Pacific, is protected on the north and south by what were once mountain promontories, now split into parallel chains of islands, separated by narrow channels of sea. Their sides are scarred with crags, terminating toward the sea in precipices of dark red rock, with deep caverns at the base, into which the surf continually dashes. On approaching the road these islands open one beyond the other, like a succession of shift

ing views the last revealing the white walls of Mazatlan, rising gradually from the water, with a beautiful back-ground of dim blue mountains. The sky was of a dazzling purity, and the whole scene had that same clearness of outline and enchanting harmony of color which give the landscapes of Italy their greatest charm. As we ran westward on the Tropic of Cancer across the mouth of the Gulf, nothing could exceed the purity of the atmosphere.

CHAPTER V.

THE COAST OF CALIFORNIA

"There is California!" was the cry next morning at sunrise "Where?" "Off the starboard bow." I rose on my bunk in one of the deck state-rooms, and looking out of the window, watched the purple mountains of the Peninsula, as they rose in the fresh, inspiring air. We were opposite its southern extremity, and I scanned the brown and sterile coast with a glass, searching for anything like vegetation. The whole country appeared to be a mass of nearly naked rock, nourishing only a few cacti and some stunted shrubs. At the extreme end of the Peninsula the valley of San José opens inland between two ranges of lofty granite mountains. Its beautiful green level, several miles in width stretched back as far as the eye could reach. The town lies near the sea ; it is noted for the siege sustained by Lieut. Haywood and a small body of American troops during the war. Lying deep amid the most frightfully barren and rugged mountains I ever saw, the valley of San José which is watered by a small river, might be made a paradise. The scenery around it corresponded strikingly with descriptions of Syria and Palestine. The bare, yellow crags glowed in the sun with dazzling intensity, and a chain of splintered peaks in the distance wore the softest shade of violet

In spite of the forbidding appearance of the coast, a more peculiar and interesting picture than it gave can hardly be found on the Pacific. Cape San Lucas, which we passed toward evening, is a bold bluff of native granite, broken into isolated rocks at its points, which present the appearance of three distinct and perfectly-formed pyramids. The white, glistening rock is pierced at its base by hollow caverns and arches, some of which are fifteen or twenty feet high, giving glimpses of the ocean beyond. The structure of this cape is very similar to that of The Needles on the Isle of Wight.

On the 12th of August we passed the island of Santa Marguerita, lying across the mouth of a bay, the upper extremity of which is called Point San Lazaro. Here, the outline of the coast, as laid down on the charts in use, is very incorrect. The longitude is not only placed too far eastward by twenty to thirty miles, but an isolated mountain, rising from the sea, eight miles northwest of Point San Lazaro, is entirely wanting. This mountain—a summit of barren rock, five miles in length and about a thousand feet in height, is connected with the coast by a narrow belt of sand, forming a fine bay, twelve miles deep, curving southward till it strikes Point San Lazaro. The northern point of the headland is bordered by breakers, beyond which extends a shoal. Here the current sets strongly in shore, and here it was that a whale-ship was lost a few months since, her crew escaping to wander for days on an arid desert, without water or vegetation. The Panama, on her downward trip, ran on the shoal and was obliged to lay-to all night; in the morning, instead of the open sea promised by the chart, the crags of the unknown headland rose directly in front of her. The coast, as far as I could see with a good glass, presented an unbroken level of glaring white sand, which must extend in-

land for fifty or sixty miles, since, under the clearest of skies, no sign of rock or distant peak was visible. The appearance of the whole Peninsula, in passing—the alternations of bleak mountain, blooming plain and wide salt desert—the rumors of vast mineral wealth in its unknown interior and the general want of intelligence in relation to it—conspired to excite in me a strong wish to traverse it from end to end.

The same evening we doubled Cape San Lucas, we met the ship *Grey Eagle*, of Philadelphia, one of the first of the California squadron. She was on her way from San Francisco to Mazatlan, with two hundred passengers on board, chiefly Mexicans. Three cheers were given and returned, as the vessels passed each other. The temperature changed, as we left the tropics behind and met the north-western trades; the cool winds drove many passengers from the deck, and the rest of us had some chance for exercise. All were in the best spirits, at the prospect of soon reaching our destination, and the slightest thread of incident, whereto a chance for amusement might be hung, was eagerly caught up. There was on board a man of rather grave demeanor, who, from the circumstance of having his felt hat cocked up like a general's, wearing it square across his brows and standing for long whiles with his arms folded, in a meditative attitude, had been generally nicknamed "Napoleon." There was no feature of his face like the great Corsican's, but from the tenacity with which he took his stand on the mizen-yard and folded his arms every evening, the passengers supposed he really imagined a strong resemblance. One of those days, in a spirit of mischief, they bought a felt hat gave it the same cocked shape, and bribed one of the negro cooks to wear it and take off Napoleon. Accordingly, as the latter began ascending the shrouds to his favorite post, the cook went up

the opposite side. Napoleon sat down on the yard, braced himself against the mast and folded his arms ; the cook, slyly watching his motions, imitated them with a gravity which was irresistible. All the passengers were by this time gathered on the quarter-deck, shouting with laughter : it was singular how much merriment so boyish a trick could occasion. Napoleon bore it for a time with perfect stolidity, gazing on the sunset with unchanged solemnity of visage. At last, getting tired of the affair, he looked down on the crowd and said : " you have sent me a very fit representative of yourselves." The laugh was stopped suddenly, and from that time forth Napoleon was not disturbed in his musings.

The only other point of interest which we saw on the Peninsular coast, was Benito Island, off the Bay of Sebastian Viscaïno, so named, after the valiant discoverer of California. Two mornings after, I saw the sun rise behind the mountains back of San Diego. Point Loma, at the extremity of the bay, came in sight on the left, and in less than an hour we were at anchor before the hide-houses at the landing place. The southern shore of the bay is low and sandy ; from the bluff heights on the opposite side a narrow strip of shingly beach makes out into the sea, like a natural breakwater, leaving an entrance not more than three hundred yards broad. The harbor is the finest on the Pacific, with the exception of Acapulco, and capable of easy and complete defense. The old hide-houses are built at the foot of the hills just inside the bay, and a fine road along the shore leads to the town of San Diego, which is situated on a plain, three miles distant and barely visible from the anchorage. Above the houses, on a little eminence, several tents were planted, and a short distance further were several recent graves, surrounded by paling. A

number of people were clustered on the beach, and boats laden with passengers and freight, instantly put off to us. In a few minutes after our gun was fired, we could see horsemen coming down from San Diego at full gallop, one of whom carried behind him a lady in graceful riding costume. In the first boat were Colonel Weller, U. S. Boundary Commissioner, and Major Hill of the Army. Then followed a number of men, lank and brown "as is the ribbed sea-sand"—men with long hair and beards, and faces from which the rigid expression of suffering was scarcely relaxed. They were the first of the overland emigrants by the Gila route, who had reached San Diego a few days before. Their clothes were in tatters, their boots, in many cases, replaced by moccasins, and, except their rifles and some small packages rolled in deerskin, they had nothing left of the abundant stores with which they left home.

We hove anchor in half an hour, and again rounded Point Loma, our number increased by more than fifty passengers. The Point, which comes down to the sea at an angle of 60° has been lately purchased by an American, for what purpose I cannot imagine, unless it is with the hope of speculating on Government when it shall be wanted for a light-house. In the afternoon we passed the island of Santa Catalina, which is about twelve miles in length, rising to a height of 3,000 feet above the sea, and inhabited by herds of wild goats. Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa, which lie opposite Santa Barbara and separated from it by the channel of the same name, were left behind us in the night, and the next day we were off Cape Conception, the Cape Horn of California. True to its character, we had a cold, dense fog, and violent head-winds; the coast was shrouded from sight.

The emigrants we took on board at San Diego were objects of

general interest. The stories of their adventures by the way sounded more marvellous than anything I had heard or read since my boyish acquaintance with Robinson Crusoe, Captain Cook and John Ledyard. Taking them as the average experience of the thirty thousand emigrants who last year crossed the Plains, this California Crusade will more than equal the great military expeditions of the Middle Ages in magnitude, peril and adventure. The amount of suffering which must have been endured in the savage mountain passes and herbless deserts of the interior, cannot be told in words. Some had come by way of Santa Fé and along the savage hills of the Gila; some, starting from Red River, had crossed the Great Stake Desert and taken the road from Paso del Norte to Tucson in Sonora; some had passed through Mexico and after spending one hundred and four days at sea, run into San Diego and given up their vessel; some had landed, weary with a seven months' passage around Cape Horn, and some, finally, had reached the place on foot, after walking the whole length of the Californian Peninsula.

The emigrants by the Gila route gave a terrible account of the crossing of the Great Desert, lying west of the Colorado. They described this region as scorching and sterile—a country of burning salt plains and shifting hills of sand, whose only signs of human visitation are the bones of animals and men scattered along the trails that cross it. The corpses of several emigrants, out of companies who passed before them, lay half-buried in sand, and the hot air was made stifling by the effluvia that rose from the dry carcases of hundreds of mules. There, if a man faltered, he was gone; no one could stop to lend him a hand without a likelihood of sharing his fate. It seemed like a wonderful Providence to these emigrants, when they came suddenly upon a large

and swift stream of fresh water in the midst of the Desert, where, a year previous, there had been nothing but sterile sand. This phenomenon was at first ascribed to the melting of snow on the mountains, but later emigrants traced the river to its source in a lake about half a mile in length, which had bubbled up spontaneously from the fiery bosom of the Desert.

One of the emigrants by the Sonora route told me a story of a sick man who rode behind his party day after day, unable to keep pace with it, yet always arriving in camp a few hours later. This lasted so long that finally little attention was paid to him and his absence one night excited no apprehension. Three days passed and he did not arrive. On the fourth, a negro, traveling alone and on foot, came into camp and told them that many miles behind a man lying beside the road had begged a little water from him and asked him to hurry on and bring assistance. The next morning a company of Mexicans came up and brought word that the man was dying. The humane negro retraced his steps forty miles, and arrived just as the sufferer breathed his last. He lifted him in his arms; in the vain effort to speak, the man expired. The mule, tied to a cactus by his side, was already dead of hunger.

I was most profoundly interested in the narrative of a Philadelphian, who, after crossing Mexico from Tampico to San Plas, embarked for San Francisco, and was put ashore by his own request, at Cape San Lucas. He had three or four companions, the party supposing they might make the journey to San Diego in thirty or forty days, by following the coast. It was soon found, however, that the only supply of water was among the mountains of the interior, and they were obliged to proceed on foot to the valley of San José and follow the trail to La Paz, on

the Californian Gulf. Thence they wandered in a nearly opposite direction to Todos Santos Bay, on the Pacific, where they exchanged some of their arms for horses. The route led in a zig-zag direction across the mountain chain, from one watering-place to another, with frequent *jornadas* (journeys without water,) of thirty, forty and even sixty miles in length. Its rigors were increased by the frightful desolation of the country, and the deep gullies or *arroyos* with which it is seamed. In the beds of these they would often lose the trail, occasioning them many hours' search to recover it. The fruit of the cactus and the leaves of succulent plants formed their principal sustenance. After a month of this travel they reached San Ignacio, half-way to San Diego, where their horses failed them; the remainder of the journey was performed on foot. The length of the Peninsula is about eight hundred miles, but the distance traveled by these hardy adventurers amounted to more than fifteen hundred.

Among the passengers who came on board at San Diego, was Gen. Villamil, of the Republic of Ecuador, who was aid to Bolivar during the war of South-American independence. After the secession of Ecuador from Columbia, he obtained from Gen. Flores a grant of one of the Galapagos Islands—a group well known to whalers, lying on the equator, six hundred miles west of Guayaquil. On this island, which he named Floriana, he has lived for the past sixteen years. His colony contains a hundred and fifty souls, who raise on the light, new soil, abundant crops of grain and vegetables. The island is fifteen miles in length, by twelve in breadth, lying in lat. 1° 30' S. and its highest part is about 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. The soil is but from twelve to eighteen inches deep, yet such is the profusion of vegetable growth, that, as Gen. Villamil informed me, its depth has in many places increased six inches

since he first landed there. The supply of water is obtained in a very singular manner. A large porous rock, on the side of one of the mountains, seems to serve as an outlet or filter for some subterranean vein, since on its base, which is constantly humid, the drops collect and fall in sufficient abundance to supply a large basin in the rock below. Pipes from this deposit convey the water to the valley. Its quality is cool, sweet and limpid, and the rocky sponge from which it drips never fails in its supply.

We were within sight of the Coast Range of California all day, after passing Cape Conception. Their sides are spotted with timber, which in the narrow valleys sloping down to the sea appeared to be of large growth. From their unvarying yellow hue, we took them to be mountains of sand, but they were in reality covered with natural harvests of wild oats, as I afterwards learned, on traveling into the interior. A keen, bracing wind at night kept down the fog, and although the thermometer fell to 52° , causing a general shiver on board, I walked the deck a long time, noting the extraordinary brilliancy of the stars in the pure air. The mood of our passengers changed very visibly as we approached the close of the voyage; their exhilarant anticipations left them, and were succeeded by a reaction of feeling that almost amounted to despondency. The return to laborious life after a short exemption from its cares, as in the case of travel, is always attended with some such feeling, but among the California emigrants it was intensified by the uncertainty of their venture in a region where all the ordinary rules of trade and enterprise would be at fault.

When I went on deck in the clear dawn, while yet

"The maiden splendors of the morning-star
Shook in the steadfast blue,"

we were rounding Point Pinos into the harbor of Monterey. As we drew near, the white, scattered dwellings of the town, situated on a gentle slope, behind which extended on all sides the celebrated Pine Forest, became visible in the grey light. A handsome fort, on an eminence near the sea, returned our salute. Four vessels, shattered, weather-beaten and apparently deserted, lay at anchor not far from shore. The town is larger than I expected to find it, and from the water has the air of a large New-England village, barring the *adobe* houses. Major Lee and Lieut. Beale, who went ashore in the steamer's boat, found Gen. Riley, the Civil Governor, very ill with a fever. As we were preparing to leave, the sun rose over the mountains, covering the air with gold brighter than ever was scratched up on the Sacramento. The picturesque houses of Monterey, the pine woods behind and the hills above them, glowed like an illuminated painting, till a fog-curtain which met us at the mouth of the harbor dropped down upon the water and hid them all from sight.

At last the voyage is drawing to a close. Fifty-one days have elapsed since leaving New York, in which time we have, in a manner, coasted both sides of the North-American Continent, from the parallel of 40° N. to its termination, within a few degrees of the Equator, over seas once ploughed by the keels of Columbus and Balboa, of Grijalva and Sebastian Viscaino. All is excitement on board; the Captain has just taken his noon observation. We are running along the shore, within six or eight miles' distance, the hills are bare and sandy, but loom up finely through the deep blue haze. A brig bound to San Francisco, but fallen off to the leeward of the harbor, is making a new tack on our left, to come

up again. The coast trends somewhat more to the westward and a notch or gap is at last visible in its lofty outline.

An hour later ; we are in front of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The mountains on the northern side are 3,000 feet in height, and come boldly down to the sea. As the view opens through the splendid strait, three or four miles in width, the island rock of Alcatraz appears, gleaming white in the distance. An inward-bound ship follows close on our wake, urged on by wind and tide. There is a small fort perched among the trees on our right, where the strait is narrowest, and a glance at the formation of the hills shows that this pass might be made impregnable as Gibraltar. The town is still concealed behind the promontory around which the Bay turns to the southward, but between Alcatraz and the island of Yerba Buena, now coming into sight, I can see vessels at anchor. High through the vapor in front, and thirty miles distant, rises the peak of Monte Diablo, which overlooks everything between the Sierra Nevada and the Ocean. On our left opens the bight of Sausalito, where the U. S. propeller Massachusetts and several other vessels are at anchor.

At last we are through the Golden Gate—fit name for such a magnificent portal to the commerce of the Pacific ! Yerba Buena Island is in front ; southward and westward opens the renowned harbor, crowded with the shipping of the world, mast behind mast and vessel behind vessel, the flags of all nations fluttering in the breeze ! Around the curving shore of the Bay and upon the sides of three hills which rise steeply from the water, the middle one receding so as to form a bold amphitheatre, the town is planted and seems scarcely yet to have taken root, for tents, canvas, plank, mud and adobe houses are mingled together with the least apparent

attempt at order and durability. But I am not yet on shore. The gun of the Panama has just announced our arrival to the people on land. We glide on with the tide, past the U. S. ship Ohio and opposite the main landing, outside of the forest of masts. A dozen boats are creeping out to us over the water ; the signal is given—the anchor drops—our voyage is over

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

I LEFT the Panama, in company with Lieut. Beale, in the boat of the U. S. ship Ohio, which brought Lieutenant Ells on board. We first boarded the noble ship, which, even in San Francisco harbor, showed the same admirable order as on our own coast. She had returned from Honolulu a few days previous, after an absence of three months from California. The morning of our arrival, eighteen of her men had contrived to escape, carrying with them one of the boats, under fire from all the Government vessels in the harbor. The officers were eager for news from home, having been two months without a mail, and I was glad that my habit of carrying newspapers in my pockets enabled me to furnish them with a substantial gratification. The Ohio's boat put us ashore at the northern point of the anchorage, at the foot of a steep bank, from which a high pier had been built into the bay. A large vessel lay at the end, discharging her cargo. We scrambled up through piles of luggage, and among the crowd collected to witness our arrival, picked out two Mexicans to carry our trunks to a hotel. The barren side of the hill before us was covered with tents and canvas houses, and nearly in front a large two-story building displayed the sign: "Fremont Family Hotel."

As yet, we were only in the suburbs of the town. Crossing the shoulder of the hill, the view extended around the curve of the bay, and hundreds of tents and houses appeared, scattered all over the heights, and along the shore for more than a mile. A furious wind was blowing down through a gap in the hills, filling the streets with clouds of dust. On every side stood buildings of all kinds, begun or half-finished, and the greater part of them mere canvas sheds, open in front, and covered with all kinds of signs, in all languages. Great quantities of goods were piled up in the open air, for want of a place to store them. The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of as diverse and bizarre a character as the houses: Yankees of every possible variety, native Californians in *sarapes* and *sombreros*, Chilians, Sonorians, Kanakas from Hawaii, Chinese with long tails, Malays armed with their everlasting creeses, and others in whose embrowned and bearded visages it was impossible to recognize any especial nationality. We came at last into the plaza, now dignified by the name of Portsmouth Square. It lies on the slant side of the hill, and from a high pole in front of a long one-story adobe building used as the Custom House, the American flag was flying. On the lower side stood the Parker House—an ordinary frame house of about sixty feet front—and towards its entrance we directed our course.

Our luggage was deposited on one of the rear porticos, and we discharged the porters, after paying them two dollars each—a sum so immense in comparison to the service rendered that there was no longer any doubt of our having actually landed in California. There were no lodgings to be had at the Parker House—not even a place to unroll our blankets; but one of the proprietors accompanied us across the plaza to the City Hotel, where we ob-

tained a room with two beds at \$25 per week, meals being in addition \$20 per week. I asked the landlord whether he could send a porter for our trunks. "There is none belonging to the house," said he; "every man is his own porter here." I returned to the Parker House, shouldered a heavy trunk, took a valise in my hand and carried them to my quarters, in the teeth of the wind. Our room was in a sort of garret over the only story of the hotel; two cots, evidently of California manufacture, and covered only with a pair of blankets, two chairs, a rough table and a small looking-glass, constituted the furniture. There was not space enough between the bed and the bare rafters overhead, to sit upright, and I gave myself a severe blow in rising the next morning without the proper heed. Through a small roof-window of dim glass, I could see the opposite shore of the bay, then partly hidden by the evening fogs. The wind whistled around the eaves and rattled the tiles with a cold, gusty sound, that would have imparted a dreary character to the place, had I been in a mood to listen.

Many of the passengers began speculation at the moment of landing. The most ingenious and successful operation was made by a gentleman of New York, who took out fifteen hundred copies of *The Tribune* and other papers, which he disposed of in two hours, at one dollar a-piece! Hearing of this I bethought me of about a dozen papers which I had used to fill up crevices in packing my valise. There was a newspaper merchant at the corner of the City Hotel, and to him I proposed the sale of them, asking him to name a price. "I shall want to make a good profit on the retail price," said he, "and can't give more than ten dollars for the lot." I was satisfied with the wholesale price, which was a gain of just four thousand per cent!

I set out for a walk before dark and climbed a hill back of

the town, passing a number of tents pitched in the hollows. The scattered houses spread out below me and the crowded shipping in the harbor, backed by a lofty line of mountains, made an imposing picture. The restless, feverish tide of life in that little spot, and the thought that what I then saw and was yet to see will hereafter fill one of the most marvellous pages of all history, rendered it singularly impressive. The feeling was not decreased on talking that evening with some of the old residents, (that is, of six months' standing,) and hearing their several experiences. Every new-comer in San Francisco is overtaken with a sense of complete bewilderment. The mind, however it may be prepared for an astonishing condition of affairs, cannot immediately push aside its old instincts of value and ideas of business, letting all past experiences go for naught and casting all its faculties for action, intercourse with its fellows or advancement in any path of ambition, into shapes which it never before imagined. As in the turn of the dissolving views, there is a period when it wears neither the old nor the new phase, but the vanishing images of the one and the growing perceptions of the other are blended in painful and misty confusion. One knows not whether he is awake or in some wonderful dream. Never have I had so much difficulty in establishing, satisfactorily to my own senses, the reality of what I saw and heard.

I was forced to believe many things, which in my communications to The Tribune I was almost afraid to write, with any hope of their obtaining credence. It may be interesting to give here a few instances of the enormous and unnatural value put upon property at the time of my arrival. The Parker House rented for \$110,000 yearly, at least \$60,000 of which was paid by gamblers, who held nearly all the second story. Adjoining it on

the right was a canvas-tent fifteen by twenty-five feet, called "El dorado," and occupied likewise by gamblers, which brought \$40,000. On the opposite corner of the plaza, a building called the "Miner's Bank," used by Wright & Co., brokers, about half the size of a fire-engine house in New York, was held at a rent of \$75,000. A mercantile house paid \$40,000 rent for a one-story building of twenty feet front; the United States Hotel, \$36,000; the Post-Office, \$7,000, and so on to the end of the chapter. A friend of mine, who wished to find a place for a law-office, was shown a cellar in the earth, about twelve feet square and six deep, which he could have at \$250 a month. One of the common soldiers at the battle of San Pasquale was reputed to be among the millionaires of the place, with an income of \$50,000 *monthly*. A citizen of San Francisco died insolvent to the amount of \$41,000 the previous Autumn. His administrators were delayed in settling his affairs, and his real estate advanced so rapidly in value meantime, that after his debts were paid his heirs had a yearly income of \$40,000. These facts were indubitably attested; every one believed them, yet hearing them talked of daily, as matters of course, one at first could not help feeling as if he had been eating of "the insane root."

The prices paid for labor were in proportion to everything else. The carman of Mellus, Howard & Co. had a salary of \$6,000 a year, and many others made from \$15 to \$20 daily. Servants were paid from \$100 to \$200 a month, but the wages of the rougher kinds of labor had fallen to about \$8. Yet, notwithstanding the number of gold-seekers who were returning enfeebled and disheartened from the mines, it was difficult to obtain as many workmen as the forced growth of the city demanded. A gentleman who arrived in April told me he then found but thirty or

forty houses , the population was then so scant that not more than twenty-five persons would be seen in the streets at any one time. Now, there were probably five hundred houses, tents and sheds, with a population, fixed and floating, of six thousand. People who had been absent six weeks came back and could scarcely recognize the place. Streets were regularly laid out, and already there were three piers, at which small vessels could discharge. It was calculated that the town increased daily by from fifteen to thirty houses ; its skirts were rapidly approaching the summits of the three hills on which it is located.

A curious result of the extraordinary abundance of gold and the facility with which fortunes were acquired, struck me at the first glance. All business was transacted on so extensive a scale that the ordinary habits of solicitation and compliance on the one hand and stubborn cheapening on the other, seemed to be entirely forgotten. You enter a shop to buy something ; the owner eyes you with perfect indifference, waiting for you to state your want ; if you object to the price, you are at liberty to leave, for you need not expect to get it cheaper ; he evidently cares little whether you buy it or not. One who has been some time in the country will lay down the money, without wasting words. The only exception I found to this rule was that of a sharp-faced Down-Easter just opening his stock, who was much distressed when his clerk charged me seventy-five cents for a coil of rope, instead of one dollar. This disregard for all the petty arts of money-making was really a refreshing feature of society. Another equally agreeable trait was the punctuality with which debts were paid, and the general confidence which men were obliged to place, perforce, in each other's honesty. Perhaps this latter fact was owing, in part, to the impossibility of protecting wealth, and

consequent dependence on an honorable regard for the rights of others.

About the hour of twilight the wind fell ; the sound of a gong called us to tea, which was served in the largest room of the hotel. The fare was abundant and of much better quality than we expected—better, in fact, than I was able to find there two months later. The fresh milk, butter and excellent beef of the country were real luxuries after our sea-fare. Thus braced against the fog and raw temperature, we sallied out for a night-view of San Francisco, then even more peculiar than its daylight look. Business was over about the usual hour, and then the harvest-time of the gamblers commenced. Every “hell” in the place, and I did not pretend to number them, was crowded, and immense sums were staked at the monte and faro tables. A boy of fifteen, in one place, won about \$500, which he coolly pocketed and carried off. One of the gang we brought in the Panama won \$1,500 in the course of the evening, and another lost \$2,400. A fortunate miner made himself conspicuous by betting large piles of ounces on a single throw. His last stake of 100 oz. was lost, and I saw him the following morning dashing through the streets, trying to break his own neck or that of the magnificent *garañon* he bestrode.

Walking through the town the next day, I was quite amazed to find a dozen persons busily employed in the street before the United States Hotel, digging up the earth with knives and crumbling it in their hands. They were actual gold-hunters, who obtained in this way about \$5 a day. After blowing the fine dirt carefully in their hands, a few specks of gold were left, which they placed in a piece of white paper. A number of children were engaged in the same business, picking out the fine grains by

applying to them the head of a pin, moistened in their mouths I was told of a small boy having taken home \$14 as the result of one day's labor. On climbing the hill to the Post Office I observed in places, where the wind had swept away the sand, several glittering dots of the real metal, but, like the Irishman who kicked the dollar out of his way, concluded to wait till I should reach the heap. The presence of gold in the streets was probably occasioned by the leakings from the miners' bags and the sweepings of stores; though it may also be, to a slight extent, native in the earth, particles having been found in the clay thrown up from a deep well.

The arrival of a steamer with a mail ran the usual excitement and activity of the town up to its highest possible notch. The little Post Office, half-way up the hill, was almost hidden from sight by the crowds that clustered around it. Mr. Moore, the new Postmaster, who was my fellow-traveler from New York, barred every door and window from the moment of his entrance, and with his sons and a few clerks, worked steadily for two days and two nights, till the distribution of twenty thousand letters was completed. Among the many persons I met, the day after landing, was Mr. T. Butler King, who had just returned from an expedition to the placers, in company with General Smith. Mr. Edwin Bryant, of Kentucky, and Mr. Durivage, of New Orleans, had arrived a few days previous, the former by way of the Great Salt Lake, and the latter by the northern provinces of Mexico and the Gila. I found the artist Osgood in a studio about eight feet square, with a head of Captain Sutter on his easel. He had given up gold-digging, after three months of successful labor among the mountains.

I could make no thorough acquaintance with San Francisco

during this first visit. Lieutenant Beale, who held important Government dispatches for Colonel Frémont, made arrangements to leave for San José on the second morning, and offered me a seat on the back of one of his mules. Our fellow-passenger Colonel Lyons, of Louisiana, joined us, completing the mystic number which travelers should be careful not to exceed. We made hasty tours through all the shops on Clay, Kearney, Washington and Montgomery streets, on the hunt of the proper equipments. Articles of clothing were cheaper than they had been or were afterwards; tolerable blankets could be had for \$6 a pair; coarse flannel shirts, \$3; Chilian spurs, with rowels two inches long, \$5, and Mexican sarapes, of coarse texture but gay color, \$10. We could find no saddle-bags in the town, and were necessitated to pack one of the mules. Among our camping materials were a large hatchet and plenty of rope for making lariats; in addition to which each of us carried a wicker flask slung over one shoulder. We laid aside our civilized attire, stuck long sheath-knives into our belts, put pistols into our pockets and holsters, and buckled on the immense spurs which jingled as they struck the ground at every step. Our "animals" were already in waiting; an *alazan*, the Californian term for a sorrel horse, a beautiful brown mule, two of a cream color and a dwarfish little fellow whose long forelock and shaggy mane gave him altogether an elfish character of cunning and mischief.

CHAPTER VII.

TO THE SAN JOAQUIN, ON MULEBACK

It was noon before we got everything fairly in order and moved slowly away from the City Hotel, where a number of our fellow-passengers—the only idlers in the place, because just arrived—were collected to see us start. Shouldering our packs until we should be able to purchase an *aparéjo*, or pack-saddle, from some Mexican on the road, and dragging after us two reluctant mules by their lariats of horse-hair, we climbed the first “rise,” dividing the town from the Happy Valley. Here we found a party of Sonorians encamped on the sand, with their mules turned loose and the harness scattered about them. After a little bargaining, we obtained one of their pack-saddles for eight dollars. Lieut. Beale jumped down, caught the little mule—which to his great surprise he recognized as an old acquaintance among the Rocky Mountains during the previous winter—and commenced packing. In my zeal to learn all the mysteries of mountain-life, I attempted to alight and assist him; but alas! the large rowel of my spur caught in the folds of a blanket strapped to the saddle, the girth slipped and I was ingloriously thrown on my back. The Sonorians laughed heartily, but came forward and re-adjusted the saddle with a willingness that reconciled me to their mirth.

All was finally arranged and we urged our mules along in the sand, over hills covered with thickets of evergreen oak. The guns of the Ohio, fired for the obsequies of ex-president Polk, echoed among the mountains of the bay, and companies of horsemen, coming in from the interior, appeared somewhat startled at the sound. Three miles from San Francisco is the old Mission of Dolores, situated in a sheltered valley, which is watered by a perpetual stream, fed from the tall peaks towards the sea. As we descended a long sand-hill before reaching the valley, Picayune, our pack-mule, suddenly came to a stop. Lieut. Beale, who had a most thorough knowledge of mule-craft, dismounted and untied the lash-rope; the pack had slightly shifted, and Picayune, who was as knowing as he was perverse, would not move a step till it was properly adjusted. We now kept the two loose mules in advance and moved forward in better order. The mountains beyond the Mission are bleak and barren and the dire north-west wind, sweeping in from the sea through their gorges, chilled us to the bones as we rode over them.

After ascending for some distance by a broad road, in which, at short intervals, lay the carcasses of mules and horses, attended by flocks of buzzards, we passed through a notch in the main chain, whence there was a grand look-out to the sea on one side, to the bay on the other. We were glad, however, to descend from these raw and gusty heights, along the sides of the mountains of San Bruno, to the fertile and sheltered plains of Santa Clara. Large herds of cattle are pastured in this neighborhood, the grass in the damp flats and wild oats on the mountains, affording them sufficient food during the dry season. At Sanchez' Rancho, which we reached just before sunset, there was neither grass nor barley and we turned our mules supperless into the corral. The Señores

Sanchez, after some persuasion, stirred up the fire in the mud kitchen and prepared for us a *guisado* of beef and onions, with some rank black tea. As soon as it was dark, we carried our equipments into the house, and by a judicious arrangement of our saddles, blankets and clothes, made a grand bed for three where we should have slept, had fleas been lobsters. But as they were fleas, of the largest and savagest kind, we nearly perished before morning. Rather than start for the day with starved animals, we purchased half a *fanega*—a little more than a bushel—of wheat, for \$5. Mr. Beale's horse was the only one who did justice to this costly feed, and we packed the rest on the back of little Picayune, who gave an extra groan when it was added to his load.

Our road now led over broad plains, through occasional belts of timber. The grass was almost entirely burnt up, and dry, gravelly arroyos, in and out of which we went with a plunge and a scramble, marked the courses of the winter streams. The air was as warm and balmy as May, and fragrant with the aroma of a species of *gnaphalium*, which made it delicious to inhale. Not a cloud was to be seen in the sky, and the high, sparsely-wooded mountains on either hand, showed softened and indistinct through a blue haze. The character of the scenery was entirely new to me. The splendid valley, untenanted except by a few solitary *rancheros* living many miles apart, seemed to be some deserted location of ancient civilization and culture. The wooded slopes of the mountains are lawns, planted by Nature with a taste to which Art could add no charm. The trees have nothing of the wild growth of our forests; they are compact, picturesque, and grouped in every variety of graceful outline. The hills were covered to the summit with fields of wild oats, coloring them

as far as the eye could reach, with tawny gold, against which the dark, glossy green of the oak and cypress showed with peculiar effect. As we advanced further, these natural harvests extended over the plain, mixed with vast beds of wild mustard, eight feet in height, under which a thick crop of grass had sprung up, furnishing sustenance to the thousands of cattle, roaming everywhere unherded. The only cultivation I saw was a small field of maize, green and with good ears.

I never felt a more thorough, exhilarating sense of freedom than when first fairly afloat on these vast and beautiful plains. With the mule as my shallop, urged steadily onward past the tranquil isles and long promontories of timber; drinking, with a delight that almost made it a flavor on the palate, the soft, elastic, fragrant air; cut off, for the time, from every irksome requirement of civilization, and cast loose, like a stray, unshackled spirit, on the bosom of a new earth, I seemed to take a fresh and more perfect lease of existence. The mind was in exquisite harmony with the outer world, and the same sensuous thrill of Life vibrated through each. The mountains showed themselves through the magical screen of the haze; far on our left the bay made a faint, glimmering line, like a rod of light, cutting off the hardly-seen hills beyond it, from the world; and on all sides, from among the glossy clumps of bay and evergreen oak, the chirrup and cheery whistle of birds rang upon the air.

After a ride of twenty-five miles without grass, water or sign of habitation, we stopped to rest at a ranche, in the garden of which I found a fine patch of grape vines, laden with flourishing bunches. We watered our mules with a basket of Indian manufacture, so closely plaited that scarcely a drop found its way through. At the ranche we met an emigrant returning from the mines, and

were strongly advised to turn back. He had evidently mistaken his capacity when he came to California. "You think you are very wise," said he, "and you'll believe nothing; but it won't be long before you'll find out the truth of my words. You'll have to sleep on the ground every night and take care of your own animals; and you may think yourselves lucky if you get your regular meals." We fully agreed with him in every respect, but he took it all for unbelieving irony. At Whisman's ranche, two miles further, we stopped to dinner. The sight of a wooden house gladdened our eyes, and still more so that of the home-made bread, fresh butter and milk which Mrs. Whisman set before us. The family had lived there nearly two years and were well contented with the country. The men go occasionally to the mines and dig, but are prudent enough not to neglect their farming operations. The grass on the vega before the house was still thick and green, and a well fifteen feet deep supplied them with good water. The vegetables in their garden, though planted late, were growing finely; the soil is a rich, dark loam, now as cracked and dry as a cinder, but which, under the Winter and Spring rains, is hidden by a deluge of vegetable bloom.

As evening drew on the white spire of Santa Clara Mission showed in the distance, and an hour's sharp riding brought us in front of its old white-washed walls. The buildings, once very spacious in extent, are falling into ruin, and a single monk in the corridor, habited in a very dirty cowl and cassock, was the only saintly inhabitant we saw. The Mission estate, containing twenty-five thousand head of cattle and many square leagues of land, was placed by Gen. Kearney in charge of Padre del Real, President of the Missions of the North. The Padre, however, exceeded his powers by making leases of the Mission lands to emigrants and others

and devoting the proceeds to the benefit of the Church Personal. At the time we passed, several frame houses had sprung up around the Mission, on grounds thus leased. Beyond the buildings, we entered a magnificent road, three miles in length, and shaded by an avenue of evergreen oaks, leading to Pueblo San José, which we reached at dusk.

Pueblo San José, situated about five miles from the southern extremity of the Bay of San Francisco, and in the mouth of the beautiful valley of San José, is one of the most flourishing inland towns in California. On my first visit, it was mainly a collection of adobe houses, with tents and a few clapboard dwellings, of the season's growth, scattered over a square half-mile. As we were entering, I noticed a little white box, with pillars and triangular façade in front, and remarked to my friend that it had certainly been taken bodily from Lynn and set down there. Truly enough, it was a shoe store! Several stores and hotels had been opened within a few weeks, and the price of lots was only lower than those of San Francisco. We rode into an open plaza, a quarter of a mile in length, about which the town was built, and were directed to the Miner's Home, a decent-looking hotel, near its northern end. Our mules were turned into a stable at hand; tea, with the substantial addition of beefsteak, was served to us, and lighting the calumet, we lounged on the bench at the door, enjoying that repose which is only tasted after wearisome travel. Lieut. Beale went off to seek Col. Frémont, who was staying at the house of Mr. Grove Cook; Col. Lyons and myself lay down on the floor among half a dozen other travelers and fleas which could not be counted.

In the morning we went with Lieut. Beale to call upon Col. Frémont, whom we found on the portico of Mr. Cook's house,

wearing a sombrero and Californian jacket, and showing no trace of the terrible hardships he had lately undergone. It may be interesting to the thousands who have followed him, as readers may, on his remarkable journeys and explorations for the past eight years, to know that he is a man of about thirty-five years of age, of medium height, and lightly, but most compactly knit—in fact, I have seen in no other man the qualities of lightness, activity, strength and physical endurance in so perfect an equilibrium. His face is rather thin and embrowned by exposure; his nose a bold aquiline and his eyes deep-set and keen as a hawk's. The rough camp-life of many years has lessened in no degree his native refinement of character and polish of manners. A stranger would never suppose him to be the Columbus of our central wildernesses, though when so informed, would believe it without surprise.

After the disastrous fate of his party on the head waters of the Rio del Norte, Col. Frémont took the southern route through Sonora, striking the Gila River at the Pimos Village. It was exceedingly rough and fatiguing, but he was fortunate enough to find in the bottoms along the river, where no vegetation had been heard of or expected, large patches of wild wheat. The only supposition by which this could be accounted for, was that it fell from the store-wagons attached to Major Graham's command, which passed over the route the previous autumn. Otherwise, the bursting forth of a river in the midst of the Great Desert, which I have already mentioned, and the appearance of wheat among the sterile sands of the Gila, would seem like a marvellous coincidence, not wholly unsuited to the time. Col. Frémont had just returned from the Mariposa River, where his party of men was successfully engaged in gold-digging. In addition, he had com

menced a more secure business, in the establishment of a steam saw-mill at Pueblo San José. The forests of redwood close at hand make fine timber, and he had a year's work engaged before the mill was in operation. Lumber was then bringing \$500 per thousand feet, and not long before brought \$1,500.

At the house of Mr. Cook we also saw Andrew Sublette, the celebrated mountaineer, who accompanied Lieut. Beale on his overland journey, the winter before. He was lame from scurvy brought on by privations endured on that occasion and his subsequent labors in the placers. Sublette, who from his bravery and daring has obtained among the Indians the name of Kee-ta-tah-ve-sak, or One-who-walks-in-fire, is a man of about thirty-seven, of fair complexion, long brown hair and beard, and a countenance expressing the extreme of manly frankness and integrity. Lieut. Beale, who has the highest admiration of his qualities, related to me many instances of his heroic character. Preuss and Kreuzfeldt, Frémont's old campaigners, who so narrowly escaped perishing among the snows of the central chain, were at the Miner's Home, at the time of our stay.

About noon we saddled our mules, laid in a stock of provisions and started for Stockton. At the outset, it was almost impossible to keep the animals in order; Picayune, in spite of his load, dashed out into the mustard fields, and Ambrose, our brown mule, led us off in all sorts of zigzag chases. The man to whom we had paid \$2 a head for their night's lodging and fare, had absolutely starved them, and the poor beasts resisted our efforts to make them travel. In coursing after them through the tall weeds, we got off the trail, and it was some time before we made much progress towards the Mission of San José. The valley, fifteen miles in breadth, is well watered and may be made to produce the finest

wheat crops in the world. It is perfectly level and dotted all over its surface with clumps of magnificent oaks, cypresses and sycamores. A few miles west of the Pueblo there is a large forest of red wood, or California cypress, and the quicksilver mines of Santa Clara are in the same vicinity. Sheltered from the cold winds of the sea, the climate is like that of Italy. The air is a fluid balm.

Before traveling many miles we overtook a Sonorian riding on his *burro* or jackass, with a wooden bowl hanging to the saddle and a crowbar and lance slung crosswise before him. We offered him the use of our extra mule if he would join us, to which he gave a willing consent. Burro was accordingly driven loose laden with the gold-hunting tools, and our Bedouin, whom we christened Tompkins, trotted beside us well pleased. At the Mission of San José we dispatched him to buy meat, and for half a dollar he brought us at least six yards, salted and slightly dried for transportation. The Mission—a spacious stone building, with courtyard and long corridors—is built upon the lower slope of the mountains dividing San Francisco Bay from the San Joaquin valley, and a garden extends behind it along the banks of a little stream.

The sight of a luxuriant orchard peeping over the top of its mud walls, was too tempting to be resisted, so, leaving Lieutenant Beale to jog ahead with Tompkins and the loose animals, Colonel Lyons and myself rode up the hill, scrambled over and found ourselves in a wilderness of ripening fruit. Hundreds of pear and apple trees stood almost breaking with their harvest, which lay rotting by cart-loads on the ground. Plums, grapes, figs and other fruits, not yet ripened, filled the garden. I shall never forget how grateful the pears of San José were to our parched throats, nor what an alarming quantity we ate before we found it

possible to stop. I have been told that the garden is irrigated during the dry season, and that where this method is practicable, fruit trees of all kinds can be made to yield to a remarkable extent.

Immediately on leaving the Mission we struck into a narrow cañon among the mountains, and following its windings reached the "divide," or ridge which separates the streams, in an hour. From the summit the view extended inland over deep valleys and hazy mountain ranges as far as the vision could reach. Lines of beautiful timber followed the course of the arroyos down the sides, streaking the yellow hue of the wild oats, which grew as thickly as an ordinary crop at home. Descending to a watered valley, we heard some one shouting from a slope on our left, where a herd of cattle was grazing. It was Lieut. Beale, who had chosen our camping-ground in a little glen below, under a cluster of oaks. We unpacked, watered our mules, led them up a steep ascent, and picketed them in a thick bed of oats. I had taken the lash-rope, of plaited raw-hide, for the purpose of tethering Ambrose, but Tompkins, who saw me, cried: "*Cuidado! hay bastante coyotes aqui,*" (Take care! there are plenty of coyotes here)—which animals invariably gnaw in twain all kinds of ropes except hemp and horse-hair. The picketing done, we set about cooking our supper; Tompkins was very active in making the fire, and when all was ready, produced a good dish of stewed beef and tortillas, to which we added some ham, purchased in San José at eighty cents the pound. We slept under the branching curtains of our glen chamber, wakened only once or twice by the howling of the coyotes and the sprinkling of rain in our faces. By sunrise we had breakfast and started again.

The first twenty miles of our journey passed through one of

the most beautiful regions in the world. The broad oval valleys, shaded by magnificent oaks and enclosed by the lofty mountains of the Coast Range, open beyond each other like a suite of palace chambers, each charming more than the last. The land is admirably adapted for agricultural or grazing purposes, and in a few years will become one of the most flourishing districts in California.

We passed from these into hot, scorched plains, separated by low ranges of hills, on one of which is situated Livermore's Rancho, whose owner, Mr. Livermore, is the oldest American resident in the country, having emigrated thither in 1820. He is married to a native woman, and seems to have entirely outgrown his former habits of life. We obtained from him dinner for ourselves and mules at \$2 25 each ; and finding there was neither grass nor water for twenty-five miles, made an early start for our long afternoon's ride. The road entered another cañon, through which we toiled for miles before reaching the last "divide." On the summit we met several emigrant companies with wagons, coming from Sutter's Mill. The children, as brown and wild-looking as Indians, trudged on in the dust, before the oxen, and several girls of twelve years old, rode behind on horses, keeping together the loose animals of the party. Their invariable greeting was : "How far to water ?"

From the top of the divide we hailed with a shout the great plain of San Joaquin, visible through the openings among the hills, like a dark-blue ocean, to which the leagues of wild cats made a vast beach of yellow sand. At least a hundred miles of its surface were visible, and the hazy air, made more dense by the smoke of the burning tulé marshes, alone prevented us from seeing the snowy outline of the Sierra Nevada. After descending

and traveling a dozen miles on the hot, arid levee, we reached a slough making out from the San Joaquin. The sun had long been down, but a bright quarter-moon was in the sky, by whose light we selected a fine old tree for our place of repose. A tent, belonging to some other travelers, was pitched at a little distance.

Feeling the ground with our hands to find the spots where the grass was freshest, we led our mules into a little tongue of meadow-land, half-embraced by the slough, and tied them to the low branches, giving them the full benefit of their tether. Tompkins complained of illness, and rolling himself in his sarape, lay down on the plain, under the open sky. We were too hungry to dispose of the day so quickly; a yard of jerked beef was cut off, and while Lieut. Beale prepared it for cooking, Col. Lyons and myself wandered about in the shadow of the trees, picking up everything that cracked under our feet. The clear red blaze of the fire made our oak-tree an enchanted palace. Its great arms, that arched high above us and bent down till they nearly reached the ground, formed a hollow dome around the columnar trunk, which was fretted and embossed with a thousand ornaments of foliage. The light streamed up, momentarily, reddening the deeps within deeps of the bronze-like leaves; then sinking low again, the shadows returned and the stars winked brightly between the wreathed mullions of our fantastic windows.

The meal finished, we went towards the tent in our search for water. Several sleepers, rolled in their blankets, were stretched under the trees, and two of them, to our surprise, were enjoying the luxury of mosquito bars. On the bank of the slough, we found a shallow well, covered with dead boughs; Lieut. Beale, stretching his hand down towards the water, took hold of a snake, which was even more startled than he. Our quest was repaid by

a hearty draught, notwithstanding its earthy flavor, and we betook ourselves to sleep. The mosquitos were terribly annoying; after many vain attempts to escape them, I was forced to roll a blanket around my head, by which means I could sleep till I began to smother, and then repeat the operation. Waking about midnight, confused and flushed with this business, I saw the moon, looming fiery and large on the horizon. "Surely," thought I, with a half-awake wandering of fancy, "the moon has been bitten by mosquitos, and that is the reason why her face is so swollen and inflamed."

Five miles next morning took us to the San Joaquin, which was about thirty yards in width. Three Yankees had "squatted" at the crossing, and established a ferry; the charge for carrying over a man and horse was \$2, and as this route was much traveled, their receipts ranged from \$500 to \$1,000 daily. In addition to this, they had a tavern and grazing camp, which were very profitable. They built the ferry-boat, which was a heavy flat, hauled across with a rope, with their own hands, as well as a launch of sixty tons, doing a fine business between Stockton and San Francisco. Tompkins, who perhaps imagined that some witchcraft of ours had occasioned his illness, here left us, and we saw his swarthy face no more. Disengaging our loose mules from a corral full of horses, into which they had dashed, from a sudden freak of affection, we launched into another plain, crossed in all directions by tulé swamps, and made towards a dim shore of timber twelve miles distant.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMP-LIFE, AND A RIDE TO THE DIGGINGS.

As we came off the scorching calm of the plain into the shadow of the trees, we discerned two tents ahead, on a gentle knoll. This was the camp of Major Graham, who commanded the expedition sent from Monterey, Mexico, overland into California, in the summer of 1848. He was employing a little time, before returning home, in speculating on his own account and had established himself near Stockton with a large herd of horses and cattle, on which he was making good profits. Lieut. Beale was an old acquaintance of the Major's, and as friends of the former we were made equally welcome. We found him sitting on a camp-stool, outside the tent, wearing a hunting-jacket and broad-brimmed white hat. With a prompt hospitality that would take no denial, he ordered our mules driven out to his *caballada*, had our packs piled up in the shade of one of his oaks, and gave directions for dinner. For four days thereafter we saw the stars through his tree-tops, between our dreams, and shared the abundant fare of his camp-table, varying the delightful repose of such life by an occasional gallop into Stockton. Mr. Callahan, an old settler, who had pitched his tent near Major Graham's, went out every morning to hunt elk among the tulé, and we were daily supplied with steaks

and outlets from his spoils. In the early morning the elk might be seen in bands of forty or fifty, grazing on the edge of the marshes, where they were sometimes lassoed by the native vaqueros, and taken into Stockton. We saw the coyotes occasionally prowling along the margin of the slough, but they took good care to sneak off before a chance could be had to shoot them. The plain was perforated in all directions by the holes of a large burrowing squirrel, of a gray color, and flocks of magpies and tufted partridges made their covert in the weeds and wild oats.

Our first visit to Stockton was made in company, on some of Major Graham's choicest horses. A mettled roan *canalo* fell to my share, and the gallop of five miles without check was most inspiring. A view of Stockton was something to be remembered. There, in the heart of California, where the last winter stood a solitary ranche in the midst of tulé marshes, I found a canvas town of a thousand inhabitants, and a port with twenty-five vessels at anchor! The mingled noises of labor around—the click of of hammers and the grating of saws—the shouts of mule drivers—the jingling of spurs—the jar and jostle of wares in the tents—almost cheated me into the belief that it was some old commercial mart, familiar with such sounds for years past. Four months, only, had sufficed to make the place what it was; and in that time a wholesale firm established there (one out of a dozen) had done business to the amount of \$100,000. The same party had just purchased a lot eighty by one hundred feet, on the principal street, for \$6,000, and the cost of erecting a common one-story clapboard house on it was \$15,000.

I can liken my days at Major Graham's camp to no previous phase of my existence. They were the realization of a desire sometimes felt, sometimes expressed in poetry, but rarely enjoyed

in complete fulfilment. In the repose of Nature, unbroken day or night ; the subtle haze pervading the air, softening all sights and subduing all sounds ; the still, breathless heat of the day and the starry hush of the night—the oak-tree was for me a perfect Castle of Indolence. Lying at full length on the ground, in listless ease, whichever way I looked my eye met the same enchanting groupage of the oaks, the same glorious outlines and massed shadows of foliage ; while frequent openings, through the farthest clumps, gave boundless glimpses of the plain beyond. Scarcely a leaf stirred in the slumberous air ; and giving way to the delicate languor that stole in upon my brain, I seemed to lie apart from my own mind and to watch the lazy waves of thought that sank on its shores without a jar. All effort—even the memory of effort—came like a sense of pain. It was an abandonment to rest, like that of the “Lotos-Eaters,” and the feeling of these lines, not the words, was with me constantly :

“ Why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown ;
Nor ever fold our wings
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber’s holy balm :
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
‘ There is no joy but calm ! ’ ”

There is one peculiarity about the Californian oaks, which I do not remember to have seen noticed. In the dry heat of the long summer seasons, their fibre becomes brittle, and frequently at noon-day, when not a breath of air is stirring, one of their stout arms parts from the trunk without the slightest warning sound,

and drops bodily to the earth. More than one instance is related, in which persons have been killed by their fall. For this reason the native Californians generally camp outside of the range of the limbs.

After discussing our further plans, it was decided to visit the Mokelumne Diggings, which were the most accessible from Stockton. Accordingly, on Monday morning, our mules were driven in from the plain and saddled for the journey. The sun was shining hotly as we rode over the plain to Stockton, and the tent-streets of the miraculous town glowed like the avenues of a brick-kiln. The thermometer stood at 98°, and the parched, sandy soil burnt through our very boot-soles. We therefore determined to wait till evening before starting for another stage to the Mokelumne. While waiting in the tent of Mr. Belt, the alcalde of the place, I made acquaintance with two noted mountaineers—Mr. William Knight, the first man who followed in the track of Lewis and Clark, on the Columbia River, and White Elliott, a young Missourian, who for ten years had been rambling through New Mexico and the Rocky Mountains. The latter had been one of Lieut. Beale's men on the Gila, and the many perils they then shared gave their present meeting a peculiar interest. Elliott, who, young as he was, had undergone everything that could harden and toughen a man out of all sensibility, colored like a young girl; his eyes were wet and he scarcely found voice to speak. I had many opportunities of seeing him afterwards and appreciating his thorough nobleness and sincerity of character.

Mr. Raney, who had just established a line of conveyance to the Mokelumne, kindly offered to accompany us as far as his ranche on the Calaveras River, twenty-four miles distant. We started at four o'clock, when a pleasant breeze had sprung up

and rode on over the level plain, through beautiful groves of oak. The trail was crossed by deep, dry arroyos, which, in the rainy season, make the country almost impassable; now, however, the very beds of the tulé marshes were beginning to dry up. The air was thicker than ever with the smoke of burning tulé, and as we journeyed along in the hazy moonlight, the lower slopes of the mountains were not visible till we reached Mr. Raney's ranche, which lies at their base. We gave our tired mules a good feed of barley, and, after an excellent supper which he had prepared, betook ourselves to rest. The tent was made of saplings, roofed with canvas, but had cost \$1,000; the plain all around was covered deep with dust, which the passing trains of mules kept constantly in the air. Nevertheless, for the first time in several days, we slept in a bed—the bed of Calaveras River, and in the deepest hollow of its gold-besprinkled sands. The stream, which in the spring is thirty feet deep, was perfectly dry, and the timber on its banks made a roof far above, which shut out the wind and sand, but let in the starlight. Heaping the loose gravel for pillows, we enjoyed a delightful sleep, interrupted only once by the howling of a large gray wolf, prowling in the thickets over us.

While waiting for breakfast, I saw a curious exemplification of the careless habits of the miners, in regard to money. One of the mule-drivers wanted to buy a pistol which belonged to another, and as the article was in reality worth next to nothing, offered him three dollars for it. "I will sell nothing for such a beggarly sum," said the owner: "you are welcome to take the pistol." The other took it, but laid the three dollars on a log, saying: "you must take it, for I shall never touch it again." "Well," was the reply, "then I'll do what I please with it;" and he flung the dollars into the road and walked away. An Irishman who

stood by, raked in the dust for some time, but only recovered about half the money.

Leaving the ranche soon after sunrise, we entered the hills. The country was dotted with picturesque clumps of oak, and, as the ground became higher and more broken, with pines of splendid growth. Around their feet were scattered piles of immense cones, which had been broken up for the sake of the spicy kernels they contain. Trails of deer could be seen on all the hills, leading down to chance green spots in the hollows, which a month since furnished water. Now, however, the ground was parched as in a furnace; the vegetation snapped like glass under the hoofs of our mules, and the cracks and seams in the arid soil seemed to give out an intense heat from some subterranean fire. In the glens and *cañadas*, where the little air stirring was cut off, the mercury rose to 110° ; perspiration was dried as soon as formed, and I began to think I should soon be done to a turn.

After traveling about fourteen miles, we were joined by three miners, and our mules, taking a sudden liking for their horses, jogged on at a more brisk rate. The instincts of the mulish heart form an interesting study to the traveler in the mountains. I would, were the comparison not too ungallant, liken it to a woman's, for it is quite as uncertain in its sympathies, bestowing its affections where least expected, and when bestowed, quite as constant, so long as the object is not taken away. Sometimes a horse, sometimes an ass, captivates the fancy of a whole drove of mules; but often an animal nowise akin. Lieut. Beale told me that his whole train of mules once took a stampede on the plains of the Cimarone, and ran half a mile, when they halted in apparent satisfaction. The cause of their freak was found to be a buffalo calf, which had strayed from the herd. They were frisking around it

in the greatest delight, rubbing their noses against it, throwing up their heels and making themselves ridiculous by abortive attempts to neigh and bray, while the poor calf, unconscious of its attractive qualities, stood trembling in their midst. It is customary to have a horse in the *atajos*, or mule-trains, of the traders in Northern Mexico, as a sort of magnet to keep together the separate atoms of the train, for, whatever the temptation, they will never stray far from him.

We turned from the main road, which led to the Upper Bar and took a faint trail leading over the hills to the Lower Bar. The winding *cañon* up which we passed must be a paradise in Spring; even at the close of August the dry bed of the stream was shaded by trees of every picturesque form that a painter could desire. Crossing several steep spurs, we reached the top of the divide overlooking the Mokelumne Valley, and here one of the most charming mountain landscapes in the world opened to our view. Under our very feet, as it seemed, flowed the river, and a little corner of level bottom, wedged between the bases of the hills, was dotted with the tents of the gold-hunters, whom we could see burrowing along the water. The mountains, range behind range, spotted with timber, made a grand, indistinct background in the smoky air,—a large, fortress-like butte, toward the Cosumne River, the most prominent of all. Had the atmosphere been clearer, the snowy crown of the Nevada, beyond all, would have made the picture equal to any in Tyrol.

Coming down the almost perpendicular side of the hill, my saddle began to slip over the mule's straight shoulders, and, dismounting, I waded the rest of the way knee-deep in dust. Near the bottom we came upon the Sonorian Town, as it was called, from the number of Mexican miners encamped there. The place

which was a regularly laid-out town of sapling houses, without walls and roofed with loose oak boughs, had sprung up in the wilderness in three weeks: there were probably three hundred persons living in or near it. Under the open canopies of oak we heard, as we passed along, the jingle of coin at the monte tables, and saw crowds gathered to watch the progress of the game. One of the first men Lieutenant Beale saw was Baptiste Perrot, a mountaineer who had been in his overland party. He kept a hotel, which was an open space under a branch roof; the appliances were two tables of rough plank, (one for meals and one for monte,) with logs resting on forked limbs as seats, and a bar of similar materials, behind which was ranged a goodly stock of liquors and preserved provisions. We tethered our mules to a stump in the rear of the hotel, hastened supper, and made ourselves entirely at home.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DIGGINGS ON MOKELUMNE RIVER.

OUR first move was for the river bottom, where a number of Americans, Sonorians, Kanakas and French were at work in the hot sun. The bar, as it was called, was nothing more nor less than a level space at the junction of the river with a dry arroyo or "gulch," which winds for about eight miles among the hills. It was hard and rocky, with no loose sand except such as had lodged between the large masses of stone, which must of course be thrown aside to get at the gold. The whole space, containing about four acres, appeared to have been turned over with great labor, and all the holes slanting down between the broken strata of slate, to have been explored to the bottom. No spot could appear more unpromising to the inexperienced gold-hunter. Yet the Sonorians, washing out the loose dust and dirt which they scraped up among the rocks, obtained from \$10 to two ounces daily. The first party we saw had just succeeded in cutting a new channel for the shrunken waters of the Mokelumne, and were commencing operations on about twenty yards of the river-bed, which they had laid bare. They were ten in number, and their only implements were shovels, a rude cradle for the top layer of earth, and flat wooden bowls for washing out the sands. Bap

tiste took one of the bowls which was full of sand, and in five minutes showed us a dozen grains of bright gold. The company had made in the forenoon about three pounds; we watched them at their work till the evening, when three pounds more were produced, making an average of seven ounces for each man. The gold was of the purest quality and most beautiful color. When I first saw the men, carrying heavy stones in the sun, standing nearly waist-deep in water, and grubbing with their hands in the gravel and clay, there seemed to me little virtue in resisting the temptation to gold digging; but when the shining particles were poured out lavishly from a tin basin, I confess there was a sudden itching in my fingers to seize the heaviest crowbar and the biggest shovel.

A company of thirty, somewhat further down the river, had made a much larger dam, after a month's labor, and a hundred yards of the bed were clear. They commenced washing in the afternoon and obtained a very encouraging result. The next morning, however, they quarreled, as most companies do, and finally applied to Mr. James and Dr. Gillette, two of the principal operators, to settle the difficulty by having the whole bed washed out at their own expense and taking half the gold. As all the heavy work was done, the contractors expected to make a considerable sum by the operation. Many of the Americans employed Sonorians and Indians to work for them, giving them half the gold and finding them in provisions. Notwithstanding the enormous prices of every article of food, these people could be kept for about a dollar daily—consequently those who hire them profited handsomely.

After we had taken the sharp edge off our curiosity, we returned to our quarters. Dr. Gillette, Mr. James, Captain Tracy and several other of the miners entertained us with a hospitality

as gratifying as it was unexpected. In the evening we sat down to a supper prepared by Baptiste and his partner, Mr. Fisher, which completed my astonishment at the resources of that wonderful land. There, in the rough depth of the hills, where three weeks before there was scarcely a tent, and where we expected to live on jerked beef and bread, we saw on the table green corn, green peas and beans, fresh oysters, roast turkey, fine Goshen butter and excellent coffee. I will not pretend to say what they cost, but I began to think that the fable of Aladdin was nothing very remarkable, after all. The genie will come, and had come to many whom I saw in California; but the rubbing of the lamp—aye, there's the rub. There is nothing in the world so hard on the hands.

I slept soundly that night on the dining-table, and went down early to the river, where I found the party of ten bailing out the water which had leaked into the river-bed during the night. They were standing in the sun, and had two hours' hard work before they could begin to wash. Again the prospect looked uninviting, but when I went there again towards noon, one of them was scraping up the sand from the bed with his knife, and throwing it into a basin, the bottom of which glittered with gold. Every knifeful brought out a quantity of grains and scales, some of which were as large as the finger-nail. At last a two-ounce lump fell plump into the pan, and the diggers, now in the best possible humor, went on with their work with great alacrity. Their forenoon's digging amounted to nearly six pounds. It is only by such operations as these, through associated labor, that great profits are to be made in those districts which have been visited by the first eager horde of gold hunters. The deposits most easily reached are soon exhausted by the crowd, and the

labor required to carry on further work successfully deters single individuals from attempting it. Those who, retaining their health, return home disappointed, say they have been humbugged about the gold, when in fact, they have humbugged themselves about the *work*. If any one expects to dig treasures out of the earth, in California, without severe labor, he is woefully mistaken. Of all classes of men, those who pave streets and quarry limestone are best adapted for gold diggers.

Wherever there is gold, there are gamblers. Our little village boasted of at least a dozen monte tables, all of which were frequented at night by the Americans and Mexicans. The Sonorians left a large portion of their gold at the gaming tables, though it was calculated they had taken \$5,000,000 out of the country during the summer. The excitement against them prevailed also on the Mokelumne, and they were once driven away; they afterwards quietly returned, and in most cases worked in companies, for the benefit and under the protection of some American. They labor steadily and faithfully, and are considered honest, if well watched. The first colony of gold-hunters attempted to drive out all foreigners, without distinction, as well as native Californians. Don Andres Pico, who was located on the same river, had some difficulty with them until they could be made to understand that his right as a citizen was equal to theirs.

Dr. Gillette, to whom we were indebted for many kind attentions, related to me the manner of his finding the rich gulch which attracted so many to the Mokelumne Diggings. The word *gulch*, which is in general use throughout the diggings, may not be familiar to many ears, though its sound somehow expresses its meaning, without further definition. It denotes a mountain ravine differing from ravines elsewhere as the mountains of California

differ from all others—more steep, abrupt and inaccessible. The sound of *gulch* is like that of a sudden plunge into a deep hole which is just the character of the thing itself. It bears the same relation to a ravine that a “cañon” does to a pass or gorge. About two months previous to our arrival, Dr. Gillette came down from the Upper Bar with a companion, to “prospect” for gold among the ravines in the neighborhood. There were no persons there at the time, except some Indians belonging to the tribe of José Jesus. One day at noon, while resting in the shade of a tree, Dr. G. took a pick and began carelessly turning up the ground. Almost on the surface, he struck and threw out a lump of gold of about two pounds weight. Inspired by this unexpected result, they both went to work, laboring all that day and the next, and even using part of the night to quarry out the heavy pieces of rock. At the end of the second day they went to the village on the Upper Bar and weighed their profits, which amounted to fourteen pounds! They started again the third morning under pretence of hunting, but were suspected and followed by the other diggers, who came upon them just as they commenced work. The news rapidly spread, and there was soon a large number of men on the spot, some of whom obtained several pounds per day, at the start. The gulch had been well dug up for the large lumps, but there was still great wealth in the earth and sand, and several operators only waited for the wet season to work it in a systematic manner.

The next day Col. Lyons, Dr. Gillette and myself set out on a visit to the scene of these rich discoveries. Climbing up the rocky bottom of the gulch, as by a staircase, for four miles, we found nearly every part of it dug up and turned over by the picks of the miners. Deep holes, sunk between the solid strata

or into the precipitous sides of the mountains, showed where veins of the metal had been struck and followed as long as they yielded lumps large enough to pay for the labor. The loose earth, which they had excavated, was full of fine gold, and only needed washing out. A number of Sonorians were engaged in dry washing this refuse sand—a work which requires no little skill, and would soon kill any other men than these lank and skinny Arabs of the West. Their mode of work is as follows :—Gathering the loose dry sand in bowls, they raise it to their heads and slowly pour it upon a blanket spread at their feet. Repeating this several times, and throwing out the worthless pieces of rock, they reduce the dust to about half its bulk ; then, balancing the bowl on one hand, by a quick, dexterous motion of the other they cause it to revolve, at the same time throwing its contents into the air and catching them as they fall. In this manner everything is finally winnowed away except the heavier grains of sand mixed with gold, which is carefully separated by the breath. It is a laborious occupation, and one which, fortunately, the American diggers have not attempted. This breathing the fine dust from day to day, under a more than torrid sun, would soon impair the strongest lungs.

We found many persons at work in the higher part of the gulch, searching for veins and pockets of gold, in the holes which had already produced their first harvest. Some of these gleaners, following the lodes abandoned by others as exhausted, into the sides of the mountain, were well repaid for their perseverance. Others, again, had been working for days without finding anything. Those who understood the business obtained from one to four ounces daily. Their only tools were the crowbar, pick and knife, and many of them, following the veins under strata of rock which lay deep below the surface, were obliged to work while lying flat

hard work gave him enough to start on, and two months, with the usual luck, quite reinstated him.

The largest piece found in the rich gulch weighed eleven pounds. Mr. James, who had been on the river since April, showed me a lump weighing sixty-two ounces—pure, unadulterated gold. We had a visit one day from Don Andres Pico commander of the California forces during the war. He had a company of men digging at the Middle Bar, about a mile above. He is an urbane, intelligent man, of medium stature, and of a natural gentility of character which made him quite popular among the emigrants.

From all I saw and heard, while at the Mokelumne Diggings, I judged there was as much order and security as could be attained without a civil organization. The inhabitants had elected one of their own number Alcalde, before whom all culprits were tried by a jury selected for the purpose. Several thefts had occurred, and the offending parties been severely punished after a fair trial. Some had been whipped and cropped, or maimed in some other way, and one or two of them hung. Two or three who had stolen largely had been shot down by the injured party, the general feeling among the miners justifying such a course when no other seemed available. We met near Livermore's Rancho, on the way to Stockton, a man whose head had been shaved and his ears cut off, after receiving one hundred lashes, for stealing ninety-eight pounds of gold. It may conflict with popular ideas of morality, but, nevertheless, this extreme course appeared to have produced good results. In fact, in a country without not only bolts and bars, but any effective system of law and government, this Spartan severity of discipline seemed the only security against the most frightful disorder. The result was that, except some petty

acts of larceny, thefts were rare. Horses and mules were sometimes taken, but the risk was so great that such plunder could not be carried on to any extent. The camp or tent was held inviolate, and like the patriarchal times of old, its cover protected all it enclosed. Among all well-disposed persons there was a tacit disposition to make the canvas or pavilion of rough oak-boughs as sacred as once were the portals of a church.

Our stay was delayed a day by the illness of Lient. Beale, who had been poisoned a few days previous by contact with the *rhus toxicodendron*, which is very common in California. His impatience to reach San Francisco was so great that on Saturday afternoon we got ready to return to Stockton. Our bill at the hotel was \$11 a day for man and mule—\$4 for the man and \$7 for the mule. This did not include lodgings, which each traveler was expected to furnish for himself. Some slight medical attendance, furnished to Lient. Beale, was valued at \$48. The high price of mule-keep was owing to the fact of barley being \$1 per quart and grass \$1 per handful. Dr. Gillette took a lame horse which had just come down from a month's travel among the snowy ridges, where his rider had been shot with an Indian arrow, and set out to accompany us as far as Stockton. One of our mules, which was borrowed for the occasion at Raney's Rancho, had been reclaimed by its owner, and I was thus reduced to the necessity of footing it. In this order, we left the town just before sunset, and took a mule-path leading up the steep ascent.

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From all I saw and heard, while at the Mokelumne Diggings, I judged there was as much order and security as could be attained without a civil organization. The inhabitants had elected one of their own number Alcalde, before whom all culprits were tried by a jury selected for the purpose. Several thefts had occurred, and the offending parties been severely punished after a fair trial. Some had been whipped and cropped, or maimed in some other way, and one or two of them hung. Two or three who had stolen largely had been shot down by the injured party, the general feeling among the miners justifying such a course when no other seemed available. We met near Livermore's Rancho, on the way to Stockton, a man whose head had been shaved and his ears cut off, after receiving one hundred lashes, for stealing ninety-eight pounds of gold. It may conflict with popular ideas of morality, but, nevertheless, this extreme course appeared to have produced good results. In fact, in a country without not only bolts and bars, but any effective system of law and government, this Spartan severity of discipline seemed the only security against the most frightful disorder. The result was that, except some petty

acts of larceny, thefts were rare. Horses and mules were sometimes taken, but the risk was so great that such plunder could not be carried on to any extent. The camp or tent was held inviolate, and like the patriarchal times of old, its cover protected all it enclosed. Among all well-disposed persons there was a tacit disposition to make the canvas or pavilion of rough oak-boughs as sacred as once were the portals of a church.

Our stay was delayed a day by the illness of Lieut. Beale, who had been poisoned a few days previous by contact with the *rhus toxicodendron*, which is very common in California. His impatience to reach San Francisco was so great that on Saturday afternoon we got ready to return to Stockton. Our bill at the hotel was \$11 a day for man and mule—\$4 for the man and \$7 for the mule. This did not include lodgings, which each traveler was expected to furnish for himself. Some slight medical attendance, furnished to Lieut. Beale, was valued at \$48. The high price of mule-keep was owing to the fact of barley being \$1 per quart and grass \$1 per handful. Dr. Gillette took a lame horse which had just come down from a month's travel among the snowy ridges, where his rider had been shot with an Indian arrow, and set out to accompany us as far as Stockton. One of our mules, which was borrowed for the occasion at Raney's Rancho, had been reclaimed by its owner, and I was thus reduced to the necessity of footing it. In this order, we left the town just before sunset, and took a mule-path leading up the steep ascent.

CHAPTER X.

A GALLOP TO STOCKTON, WITH SOME WORDS ON LAW AND SOCIETY.

INSTEAD of retracing our steps through the fiery depth of the cañon, we turned off eastward through a gap in the hills and took a road leading to the Double Spring. The doctor insisted on my mounting behind him on the limping horse, and we had an odd ride of it, among the dusky glens and hollows. At the Double Spring, where a large tent was pitched, three of us were furnished with supper, at a cost of \$11—not an exorbitant price, if our appetites were considered. It was decided to push on the same night to another ranche, seven miles distant, and I started in advance, on foot. The road passed between low hills, covered with patches of chapparal, the usual haunt of grizzly bears. I looked sharply at every bush, in the dim moonlight; my apprehensions were a little raised by the thought of a miner whom I had seen one evening come down to the Mokelumne, pale as a sheet, after having been chased some distance by a huge she-bear, and by the story told me at the Double Spring, of the bones of two men picked clean, having been found on the road I was traveling. I was not sorry, therefore, to hear the halting tramp of the doctor's horse behind me; the others came up after awhile, and we

reached the tent The landlord lay asleep in one corner ; we tied our animals to a tree, made one bed in common against the side of the tent, and were soon locked in sound repose.

Lieut. Beale, who was still unwell and anxious to hurry on, woke us at the peep of day, and after giving a spare feed to our mules, we took the road again. As the doctor and I, mounted on the lame horse, were shuffling along in advance, we espied a venerable old animal before us, walking in the same direction. The doctor slipped off the bridle, ran forward and caught him without any difficulty. There was no sign of any camp to be seen, and we came to the conclusion that the horse was an estray, and we might therefore lawfully make use of him. He was the most grotesque specimen of horseflesh I ever saw—lame like our own—and with his forehead broken in above the eyes, which did not prevent his having a nose of most extraordinary length and prominence. The doctor bridled him and mounted, leaving me his own horse and saddle, so that we were about equally provided. By dint of shouting and kicking we kept the beasts in a sort of shambling gallop till we reached Raney's Ranche, where the doctor took the precaution of removing the bridle and letting the horse stand loose ; the custom of the miners being, to shoot a man who puts his gear on your horse and rides him without leave.

As it happened, the precaution was not ill-timed ; for, while we lay inside the tent on a couple of benches, we heard an exclamation from some one outside. "There you are !" said the voice ; "what do you mean, you old rascal ? how came you here you know you never left me before, you know you did n't !"—Then, turning to the tent-keeper, who was standing by the cooking-fire, he enquired : "how did that horse get here ?" "Why," answered the former, with a slight variation of the truth, 'he was

driven in this morning by some men who found him on the road, about three miles from here. The men have gone on to Stockton, but left him, thinking he might have an owner somewhere, though he don't look like it." "Three miles!" ejaculated the voice: "it was six miles from here, where I camped, and the horse never left me before; you know you did n't, you rascal!" Then, coming into the tent, he repeated the whole story to us, who marvelled exceedingly that the horse should have left. "He does n't look to be much," added the man, "but I've had him two years among the mountains, and never saw sich another wonderful knowin' animal."

Sergeant Falls, who owned a ranche in the neighborhood, came along shortly after with a *caballada* which he was driving into Stockton. The day was hot, but a fine breeze blew over the hazy plain and rustled the groves of oak as we went past them on a sweeping gallop, which was scarcely broken during the whole ride of twenty-five miles. No exercise in the world is so exciting and inspiring as the traveling gait or "lope" of the Californian horse. I can compare it to nothing but the rocking motion of a boat over a light sea. There is no jar or jolt in the saddle; the rider sits lightly and securely, while the horse, obeying the slightest touch of the rein, carries him forward for hours without slackening his bounding speed. Up and down the steep sides of an arroyo—over the shoulder of a mountain, or through the flinty bed of some dry lake or river—it is all the same. One's blood leaps merrily along his veins, and the whole frame feels an elastic warmth which exquisitely fits it to receive all sensuous impressions. Ah! if horse-flesh were effortless as the wind, indestructible as adamant, what motion of sea or air—what unwearied agility of fin or steady sweep of wing—could compare with it? In the power of thus speeding

onward at will, as far as the wish might extend, one would forget his desire to soar.

I saw at the Pueblo San José a splendid pied horse belonging to Col. Frémont—the gift of Don Pio Pico—on which he had frequently ridden to San Francisco, a distance of fifty-five miles, within seven hours. When pushed to their utmost capacity, these horses frequently perform astonishing feats. The saddles in common use differ little from the Mexican; the stirrups are set back, obliging the rider to stand rather than sit, and the seat corresponds more nearly to the shape of the body than the English saddle. The horses are broken by a halter of strong rope, which accustoms them to be governed by a mere touch of the rein. On first attempting to check the gallop of one which I rode, I thoughtlessly drew the rein as strongly as for a hard-mouthed American horse. The consequence was, he came with one bound to a dead stop and I flew bolt upwards out of the saddle; but for its high wooden horn, I should have gone over his head.

At Raney's Rancho, our notice was attracted to the sad spectacle of a man, lying on the river bank, wasted by disease, and evidently near his end. He was a member of a company from Massachusetts, which had passed that way three weeks before, not only refusing to take him further, but absolutely carrying with them his share of the stores they had brought from home. This, at least, was the story told me on the spot, but I hope it was untrue. The man had lain there from day to day, without medical aid, and dependant on such attention as the inmates of the tent were able to afford him. The Dr. left some medicines with him but it was evident to all of us that a few days more would terminate his sufferings.

All the roads from Stockton to the mines were filled with *atajos*

of mules, laden with freight. They were mostly owned by Americans, many of them by former trappers and mountaineers, but the packers and drivers were Mexicans, and the *aparéjos* and *ajorja* of the mules were of the same fashion as those which, for three hundred years past, have been seen on the hills of Grenada and the Andalusian plains. With good mule-trains and experienced packers, the business yielded as much as the richest diggings. The placers and gulches of Mokelumne as well as Murphy's Diggings and those on Carson's Creek, are within fifty-five miles of Stockton; the richest diggings on the Stanislaus about sixty, and on the Tuolumne seventy. The price paid for carrying to all the nearer diggings averaged 30 cents per lb. during the summer. A mule-load varies from one to two hundred lbs., but the experienced carrier could generally reckon beforehand the expenses and profits of his trip. The intense heat of the season and the dust of the plains tended also to wear out a team, and the carriers were often obliged to rest and recruit themselves. One of them, who did a good business between Stockton and the Lower Bar of the Mokelumne, told me that his profits were about \$3,000 monthly.

I found Stockton more bustling and prosperous than ever. The limits of its canvas streets had greatly enlarged during my week of absence, and the crowd on the levee would not disgrace a much larger place at home. Launches were arriving and departing daily for and from San Francisco, and the number of mule-trains, wagons, etc., on their way to the various mines with freight and supplies kept up a life of activity truly amazing. Stockton was first laid out by Mr. Weaver, who emigrated to the country seven years before, and obtained a grant of eleven square leagues from the Government, on condition that he would obtain settlers for the whole of it within a specified time. In planning the town of Stockton,

he displayed a great deal of shrewd business tact, the sale of lots having brought him upwards of \$500,000. A great disadvantage of the location is the sloughs by which it is surrounded ; which, in the wet season, render the roads next to impassable. There seems, however, to be no other central point so well adapted for supplying the rich district between the Mokelumne and Tuolumne, and Stockton will evidently continue to grow with a sure and gradual growth.

I witnessed, while in the town, a summary exhibition of justice. The night before my arrival, three negroes, while on a drunken revel, entered the tent of a Chilian, and attempted to violate a female who was within. Defeated in their base designs by her husband, who was fortunately within call, they fired their pistols at the tent and left. Complaint was made before the Alcalde, two of the negroes seized and identified, witnesses examined, a jury summoned, and verdict given, without delay. The principal offender was sentenced to receive fifty lashes and the other twenty—both to leave the place within forty-eight hours under pain of death. The sentence was immediately carried into execution, the negroes were stripped, tied to a tree standing in the middle of the principal street, and in presence of the Alcalde and Sheriff received their punishment. There was little of that order and respect shown which should accompany even the administration of impromptu law ; the bystanders jeered, laughed, and accompanied every blow with coarse and unfeeling remarks. Some of the more intelligent professed themselves opposed to the mode of punishment, but in the absence of prisons or effective guards could suggest no alternative, except the sterner one of capital punishment.

The history of law and society in California, from the period of the golden discoveries, would furnish many instructive lessons to

the philosopher and the statesman. The first consequence of the unprecedented rush of emigration from all parts of the world into a country almost unknown, and but half reclaimed from its original barbarism was to render all law virtually null, and bring the established authorities to depend entirely on the humor of the population for the observance of their orders. The countries which were nearest the golden coast—Mexico, Peru, Chili, China and the Sandwich Islands—sent forth their thousands of ignorant adventurers, who speedily outnumbered the American population. Another fact, which none the less threatened serious consequences, was the readiness with which the worthless and depraved class of our own country came to the Pacific Coast. From the beginning, a state of things little short of anarchy might have been reasonably awaited.

Instead of this, a disposition to maintain order and secure the rights of all, was shown throughout the mining districts. In the absence of all law or available protection, the people met and adopted rules for their mutual security—rules adapted to their situation where they had neither guards nor prisons, and where the slightest license given to crime or trespass of any kind must inevitably have led to terrible disorders. Small thefts were punished by banishment from the placers, while for those of large amount or for more serious crimes, there was the single alternative of hanging. These regulations, with slight change, had been continued up to the time of my visit to the country. In proportion as the emigration from our own States increased, and the digging community assumed a more orderly and intelligent aspect, their severity had been relaxed, though punishment was still strictly administered for all offences. There had been, as nearly as I could learn, not more than twelve or fifteen executions in all, about half of which

were inflicted for the crime of murder. This awful responsibility had not been assumed lightly, but after a fair trial and a full and clear conviction, to which was added, I believe in every instance, the confession of the criminal.

In all the large digging districts, which had been worked for some time, there were established regulations, which were faithfully observed. Alcaldes were elected, who decided on all disputes of right or complaints of trespass, and who had power to summon juries for criminal trials. When a new placer or gulch was discovered, the first thing done was to elect officers and extend the area of order. The result was, that in a district five hundred miles long, and inhabited by 100,000 people, who had neither government, regular laws, rules, military or civil protection, nor even locks or bolts, and a great part of whom possessed wealth enough to tempt the vicious and depraved, there was as much security to life and property as in any part of the Union, and as small a proportion of crime. The capacity of a people for self-government was never so triumphantly illustrated. Never, perhaps, was there a community formed of more unpropitious elements; yet from all this seeming chaos grew a harmony beyond what the most sanguine apostle of Progress could have expected.

The rights of the diggers were no less definitely marked and strictly observed. Among the hundreds I saw on the Moke-lumne and among the gulches, I did not see a single dispute nor hear a word of complaint. A company of men might mark out a race of any length and turn the current of the river to get at the bed, possessing the exclusive right to that part of it, so long as their undertaking lasted. A man might dig a hole in the dry ravines, and so long as he left a shovel, pick or crowbar to show that he still intended working it, he was safe from trespass His

tools might remain there for months without being disturbed. I have seen many such places, miles away from any camp or tent, which the digger had left in perfect confidence that he should find all right on his return. There were of course exceptions to these rules—the diggings would be a Utopia if it were not so—but they were not frequent. The Alcaldes sometimes made awkward decisions, from inexperience, but they were none the less implicitly obeyed. I heard of one instance in which a case of trespass was settled to the satisfaction of both parties and the Sheriff ordered to pay the costs of Court—about \$40. The astonished functionary remonstrated, but the power of the Alcalde was supreme, and he was obliged to suffer.

The treatment of the Sonorians by the American diggers was one of the exciting subjects of the summer. These people came into the country in armed bands, to the number of ten thousand in all, and took possession of the best points on the Tuolumne, Stanislaus and Mokelumne Rivers. At the Sonorian camp on the Stanislaus there were, during the summer, several thousands of them, and the amount of ground they dug up and turned over is almost incredible. For a long time they were suffered to work peaceably, but the opposition finally became so strong that they were ordered to leave. They made no resistance, but quietly backed out and took refuge in other diggings. In one or two places, I was told, the Americans, finding there was no chance of having a fight, coolly invited them back again! At the time of my visit, however, they were leaving the country in large numbers, and there were probably not more than five thousand in all scattered along the various rivers. Several parties of them, in revenge for the treatment they experienced, committed outrages on their way home, stripping small parties of the emigrants by

the Gila route of all they possessed. It is not likely that the country will be troubled with them in future.

Abundance of gold does not always beget, as moralists tell us, a grasping and avaricious spirit. The principles of hospitality were as faithfully observed in the rude tents of the diggers as they could be by the thrifty farmers of the North and West. The cosmopolitan cast of society in California, resulting from the comingling of so many races and the primitive mode of life, gave a character of good-fellowship to all its members ; and in no part of the world have I ever seen help more freely given to the needy, or more ready coöperation in any humane proposition. Personally, I can safely say that I never met with such unvarying kindness from comparative strangers.

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT ADVENTURE IN THE MOUNTAIN.

ON reaching Stockton, Lieut. Beale and Col. Lyons decided to return to San Francisco in a launch, which was to leave the same evening. This was thought best, as mule-travel, in the condition of the former, would have greatly aggravated his illness. The mules were left in my charge, and as the management of five was an impossibility for one man, it was arranged that I should wait three days, when Mr. R. A. Parker and Mr. Atherton, of San Francisco, were to leave. These gentlemen offered to make a single *mulada* of all our animals, which would relieve me from my embarrassment. I slept that night in Mr. Lane's store, and the next morning rode out to Graham's Camp, where the Major received me with the same genial hospitality. For three days longer I shared the wildwood fare of his camp-table and slept under the canopy of his oaks. Long may those matchless trees be spared to the soil—a shore of cool and refreshing verdure to all who traverse the hot plains of San Joaquin!

Messrs. Parker and Atherton, with three other gentlemen and two servants, made their appearance about sunset. My mules had already been caught and lariatied, and joining our loose animals, we had a *mulada* of eight, with eight riders to keep them in

order. The plain was dark when we started, and the trail stretched like a dusky streak far in advance. The mules gave us infinite trouble at first, darting off on all sides ; but, by dint of hard chasing, we got them into regular file, keeping them in a furious trot before us. The volumes of dust that rose from their feet, completely enveloped us ; it was only by counting the tails that occasionally whisked through the cloud, that we could tell whether they were in order. One of my spurs gave way in the race, but there was no stopping to pick it up, nor did we halt until, at the end of twelve miles, the white tent of the ferry came in sight.

We crossed and rode onward to my old camping-place on the slough. A canvas tavern had been erected on a little knoll, since my visit, and after picketing our animals in the meadow, we proceeded to rouse the landlord. The only person we could find was an old man, lying under a tree near at hand ; he refused to stir, saying there was nothing to eat in the tent, and he would not get up and cook at that time of night. My fellow-travelers, accustomed to the free-and-easy habits of California, entered the tent without ceremony and began a general search for comestibles. The only things that turned up were a half-dozen bottles of ale in a dusty box and a globular jar of East-India preserves, on which odd materials we supped with a hearty relish. The appetite engendered by open-air life in California would have made palatable a much more incongruous meal. We then lay down on the sloping sides of the knoll, rolled in a treble thickness of blankets, for the nights were beginning to grow cool. I was awakened once or twice by a mysterious twitching of my bed-clothes and a scratching noise, the cause of which was explained when I awoke in the morning. I had been sleeping over half a

dozen squirrel-holes, to the great discomfort of the imprisoned tenants.

The old denizen of the place, in better humor after we had paid for our unceremonious supper, set about baking tortillas and stewing beef, to which we added two cans of preserved turtle soup, which we found in the tent. Our mules had scattered far and wide during the night, and several hours elapsed before they could be herded and got into traveling order. The face of the broad plain we had to cross glimmered in the heat, and the Coast Range beyond it was like the phantom of a mountain-chain. We journeyed on, hour after hour, in the sweltering blaze, crossed the divide and reached Livermore's Rancho late in the afternoon. My saddle-mule was a fine gray animal belonging to Andrew Sublette, which Lieut. Beale had taken on our way to Stockton, leaving his own *alazan* at the ranche. Mr. Livermore was absent, but one of his vaqueros was prevailed upon, by a bribe of five dollars, to take the mule out to the corral, six miles distant, and bring me the horse in its stead. I sat down in the door of the ranche to await his arrival, leaving the company to go forward with all our animals to a camping-ground, twelve miles further.

It was quite dark when the vaquero rode up with the *alazan*, and I lost no time in saddling him and leaving the ranche. The trail, no longer confined among the hills, struck out on a circular plain, ten miles in diameter, which I was obliged to cross. The moon was not risen; the soil showed but one dusky, unvaried hue; and my only chance of keeping the trail was in the sound of my horse's feet. A streak of gravelly sand soon put me at fault, and after doubling backwards and forwards a few times, I found myself adrift without compass or helm. In the uncertain gloom, my horse blundered into stony hollows, or, lost in the mazes

of the oaks, startled the buzzards and mountain vultures from their roost. The boughs rustled, and the air was stirred by the muffled beat of their wings: I could see them, like unearthly, boding shapes, as they swooped between me and the stars. At last, making a hazard at the direction in which the trail ran, I set my course by the stars and pushed steadily forward in a straight line.

Two hours of this dreary travel passed away: the moon rose, lighting up the loneliness of the wide plain and the dim, silvery sweep of mountains around it. I found myself on the verge of a steep bank, which I took to be an arroyo we had crossed on the outward journey. Getting down with some difficulty, I rode for more than a mile over the flinty bed of a lake, long since dried up by the summer heats. At its opposite side I plunged into a ghostly wood, echoing with the dismal howl of the wolves, and finally reached the foot of the mountains. The deep-sunken glen, at whose entrance I stood, had no familiar feature; the tall clumps of chaparral in its bottom, seemed fit haunts for grizzly bear; and after following it for a short distance, I turned about and urged my horse directly up the steep sides of the mountain.

It was now midnight, as near as I could judge by the moon, and I determined to go no further. I had neither fire-arms, matches nor blankets—all my equipments having gone on with the pack-mule—and it was necessary to choose a place where I could be secure from the bears, the only animal to be feared. The very summit of the mountain seemed to be the safest spot; there was a single tree upon it, but the sides, for some distance below, were bare; and if a “grizzly” should come up one side, I could dash down the other. Clambering to the top, I tied my horse to the tree, took the saddle for a pillow, and coiling into the smallest

possible compass, tried to cover myself with a square yard of saddle-blanket. It was too cold to sleep, and I lay there for hours, with aching bones and chattering teeth, looking down on the vast, mysterious depths of the landscape below me. I shall never forget the shadowy level of the plain, whose belts and spots of timber were like clouds in the wan light—the black mountain-gulfs on either hand, which the incessant yell of a thousand wolves made seem like caverns of the damned—the far, faint shapes of the distant ranges, which the moonshine covered, as with silver gossamer, and the spangled arch overhead, doubly lustrous in the thin air. Once or twice I fell into a doze, to dream of slipping off precipices and into icy chasms, and was roused by the snort of my horse, as he stood with raised ears, stretching the lariat to its full length.

When the morning star, which was never so welcome, brought the daylight in its wake, I saddled and rode down to the plain. Taking a course due north, I started off on a gallop and in less than an hour recovered the trail. I had no difficulty in finding the beautiful meadow where the party was to have camped, but there was no trace of them to be seen; the mules, as it happened, were picketed behind some timber, and the men, not yet arisen, were buried out of sight in the rank grass. I rode up to some *milpas*, (brush-huts,) inhabited by Indians, and for two reals obtained a boiled ear of corn and a melon, which somewhat relieved my chill, hungry condition. Riding ahead slowly, that my horse might now and then crop a mouthful of oats, I was finally overtaken by Mr. Atherton, who was in advance of the company. We again took our places behind the mules, and hurried on to the Mission of San José.

Mr. Parker had been seized with fever and chills during the night, and decided to rest a day at the Pueblo San José. Messrs

Atherton and Patterson, with myself, after breakfasting and making a hasty visit to the rich pear-trees and grape-vines of the garden, took a shorter road, leading around the head of the bay to Whisman's Rancho. We trotted the twenty-five miles in about four hours, rested an hour, and then set out again, hoping to reach San Francisco that night. It was too much, however, for our mules; after passing the point of Santa Clara mountain they began to scatter, and as it was quite dark, we halted in a grove near the Ruined Mission. We lay down on the ground, supperless and somewhat weary with a ride of about seventy miles. I slept a refreshing sleep under a fragrant bay-tree, and was up with the first streak of dawn to look after my mules. Once started, we spurred our animals into a rapid trot, which was not slackened till we had passed the twenty miles that intervened between us and the Mission Dolores.

When I had climbed the last sand-hill, riding in towards San Francisco, and the town and harbor and crowded shipping again opened to the view, I could scarcely realize the change that had taken place during my absence of three weeks. The town had not only greatly extended its limits, but seemed actually to have doubled its number of dwellings since I left. High up on the hills, where I had seen only sand and chapparal, stood clusters of houses; streets which had been merely laid out, were hemmed in with buildings and thronged with people; new warehouses had sprung up on the water side, and new piers were creeping out toward the shipping; the forest of masts had greatly thickened; and the noise, motion and bustle of business and labor on all sides were incessant. Verily, the place was in itself a marvel. To say that it was daily enlarged by from twenty to thirty houses may not sound very remarkable after all the stories that have

been told ; yet this, for a country which imported both lumber and houses, and where labor was then \$10 a day, is an extraordinary growth. The rapidity with which a ready-made house is put up and inhabited, strikes the stranger in San Francisco as little short of magic. He walks over an open lot in his before-breakfast stroll—the next morning, a house complete, with a family inside, blocks up his way. He goes down to the bay and looks out on the shipping—two or three days afterward a row of storehouses, staring him in the face, intercepts the view.

I found Lieut. Beale and Col. Lyons, who gave me an amusing account of their voyage on the San Joaquin. The “skipper” of the launch in which they embarked knew nothing of navigation, and Lieut. Beale, in spite of his illness, was obliged to take command. The other passengers were a company of Mexican miners. After tacking for two days among the tulé swamps, the launch ran aground ; the skipper, in pushing it off, left an oar in the sand and took the boat to recover it. Just then a fine breeze sprang up and the launch shot ahead, leaving the skipper to follow. That night, having reached a point within two miles of the site of an impossible town, called New-York-of-the-Pacific, the passengers left in a body. The next day they walked to the little village of Martinez, opposite Benicia, a distance of twenty-five miles, crossing the foot of Monte Diablo. Here they took another launch, and after tossing twelve hours on the bay, succeeded in reaching San Francisco.

At the United States Hotel I again met with Colonel Frémont, and learned the particulars of the magnificent discovery which had just been made upon his ranche on the Mariposa River. It was nothing less than a vein of gold in the solid rock—the first which had been found in California. I saw some specimens which were

in Col. Frémont's possession. The stone was a reddish quartz, filled with rich veins of gold, and far surpassing the specimens brought from North Carolina and Georgia. Some stones picked up on the top of the quartz strata, without particular selection, yielded two ounces of gold to every twenty-five pounds. Col. Frémont informed me that the vein had been traced for more than a mile. The thickness on the surface is two feet, gradually widening as it descends and showing larger particles of gold. The dip downward is only about 20° , so that the mine can be worked with little expense. The ranche upon which it is situated was purchased by Col. Frémont in 1846 from Alvarado, former Governor of the Territory. It was then considered nearly worthless, and Col. F. only took it at the moment of leaving the country, because disappointed in obtaining another property. This discovery made a great sensation throughout the country, at the time, yet it was but the first of many such. The Sierra Nevada is pierced in every part with these priceless veins, which will produce gold for centuries after every spot of earth from base to summit shall have been turned over and washed out.

Many of my fellow-passengers by the Panama were realizing their dreams of speedy fortune; some had already made \$20,000 by speculating in town lots. A friend of mine who had shipped lumber from New York to the amount of \$1000 sold it for \$14,000. At least seventy-five houses had been imported from Canton, and put up by Chinese carpenters. Washing was \$8 a dozen, and as a consequence, large quantities of soiled linen were sent to the antipodes to be purified. A vessel just in from Canton brought two hundred and fifty dozen, which had been sent out a few months before, another from the Sandwich Islands brought one hundred dozen, and the practice was becoming general.

CHAPTER XII.

SAN FRANCISCO BY DAY AND NIGHT.

A BETTER idea of San Francisco, in the beginning of September, 1849, cannot be given than by the description of a single day. Supposing the visitor to have been long enough in the place to sleep on a hard plank and in spite of the attacks of innumerable fleas, he will be awakened at daylight by the noises of building, with which the hills are all alive. The air is temperate, and the invariable morning fog is just beginning to gather. By sunrise, which gleams hazily over the Coast Mountains across the Bay, the whole populace is up and at work. The wooden buildings unlock their doors, the canvas houses and tents throw back their front curtains; the lighters on the water are warped out from ship to ship; carts and porters are busy along the beach; and only the gaming-tables, thronged all night by the votaries of chance, are idle and deserted. The temperature is so fresh as to inspire an active habit of body, and even without the stimulus of trade and speculation there would be few sluggards at this season.

As early as half-past six the bells begin to sound to breakfast, and for an hour thenceforth, their incessant clang and the braying of immense gongs drown all the hammers that are busy on a

hundred roofs. The hotels, restaurants and refectories of all kinds are already as numerous as gaming-tables, and equally various in kind. The tables d'hôte of the first class, (which charge \$2 and upwards the meal,) are abundantly supplied. There are others, with more simple and solid fare, frequented by the large class who have their fortunes yet to make. At the United States and California restaurants, on the plaza, you may get an excellent beefsteak, scantily garnished with potatoes, and a cup of good coffee or chocolate, for \$1. Fresh beef, bread, potatoes, and all provisions which will bear importation, are plenty; but milk, fruit and vegetables are classed as luxuries, and fresh butter is rarely heard of. On Montgomery street, and the vacant space fronting the water, venders of coffee, cakes and sweetmeats have erected their stands, in order to tempt the appetite of sailors just arrived in port, or miners coming down from the mountains.

By nine o'clock the town is in the full flow of business. The streets running down to the water, and Montgomery street which fronts the Bay, are crowded with people, all in hurried motion. The variety of characters and costumes is remarkable. Our own countrymen seem to lose their local peculiarities in such a crowd, and it is by chance epithets rather than by manner, that the New-Yorker is distinguished from the Kentuckian, the Carolinian from the Down-Easter, the Virginian from the Texan. The German and Frenchman are more easily recognized. Peruvians and Chilians go by in their brown ponchos, and the sober Chinese, cool and impassive in the midst of excitement, look out of the oblique corners of their long eyes at the bustle, but are never tempted to venture from their own line of business. The eastern side of the plaza, in front of the Parker House and a canvas hell called the Eldorado, are the general rendezvous of business and amusement

—combining 'change, park, club-room and promenade all in one. There, everybody not constantly employed in one spot, may be seen at some time of the day. The character of the groups scattered along the plaza is oftentimes very interesting. In one place are three or four speculators bargaining for lots, buying and selling "fifty varas square" in towns, some of which are canvas and some only paper; in another, a company of miners, brown as leather, and rugged in features as in dress; in a third, perhaps, three or four naval officers speculating on the next cruise, or a knot of genteel gamblers, talking over the last night's operations.

The day advances. The mist which after sunrise hung low and heavy for an hour or two, has risen above the hills, and there will be two hours of pleasant sunshine before the wind sets in from the sea. The crowd in the streets is now wholly alive. Men dart hither and thither, as if possessed with a never-resting spirit. You speak to an acquaintance—a merchant, perhaps. He utters a few hurried words of greeting, while his eyes send keon glances on all sides of you; suddenly he catches sight of somebody in the crowd; he is off, and in the next five minutes has bought up half a cargo, sold a town lot at treble the sum he gave, and taken a share in some new and imposing speculation. It is impossible to witness this excess and dissipation of business, without feeling something of its influence. The very air is pregnant with the magnetism of bold, spirited, unwearied action, and he who but ventures into the outer circle of the whirlpool, is spinning, ere he has time for thought, in its dizzy vortex.

But see! the groups in the plaza suddenly scatter; the city surveyor jerks his pole out of the ground and leaps on a pile of boards; the venders of cakes and sweetmeats follow his example, and the place is cleared, just as a wild bull which has been racing

down Kearney street makes his appearance. Two vaqueros, shouting and swinging their lariats, follow at a hot gallop; the dust flies as they dash across the plaza. One of them, in mid-career, hurls his lariat in the air. Mark how deftly the coil unwinds in its flying curve, and with what precision the noose falls over the bull's horns ! The horse wheels as if on a pivot, and shoots off in an opposite line. He knows the length of the lariat to a hair, and the instant it is drawn taught, plants his feet firmly for the shock and throws his body forward. The bull is "brought up" with such force as to throw him off his legs. He lies stunned a moment, and then, rising heavily, makes another charge. But by this time the second vaquero has thrown a lariat around one of his hind legs, and thus checked on both sides, he is dragged off to slaughter.

The plaza is refilled as quickly as it was emptied, and the course of business is resumed. About twelve o'clock, a wind begins to blow from the north-west, sweeping with most violence through a gap between the hills, opening towards the Golden Gate. The bells and gongs begin to sound for dinner, and these two causes tend to lessen the crowd in the streets for an hour or two. Two o'clock is the usual dinner-time for business men, but some of the old and successful merchants have adopted the fashionable hour of five. Where shall we dine to-day? the restaurants display their signs invitingly on all sides; we have choice of the United States, Tortoni's, the Alhambra, and many other equally classic resorts, but Delmonico's, like its distinguished original in New York, has the highest prices and the greatest variety of dishes. We go down Kearney street to a two-story wooden house on the corner of Jackson. The lower story is a market; the walls are garnished with quarters of beef and

mutton ; a huge pile of Sandwich Island squashes fills one corner, and several cabbage-heads, valued at \$2 each, show themselves in the window. We enter a little door at the end of the building, ascend a dark, narrow flight of steps and find ourselves in a long, low room, with ceiling and walls of white muslin and a floor covered with oil-cloth

There are about twenty tables disposed in two rows, all of them so well filled that we have some difficulty in finding places. Taking up the written bill of fare, we find such items as the following :

SOUPS		ENTREES.	
Mock Turtle	\$0 75	Fillet of Beef, mushroom	
St Julien	1 00	sauce	\$1 75
FISH.		Veal Cutlets, breaded	1 00
Boiled Salmon Trout, Anchovy		Mutton Chop	1 00
sauce	1 75	Lobster Salad	2 00
BOILED.		Sirloin of Venison	1 50
Leg Mutton, caper sauce	1 00	Baked Macaroni	0 75
Corned Beef, Cabbage,	1 00	Beef Tongue, sauce piquante	1 00
Ham and Tongues	0 75		

So that, with but a moderate appetite, the dinner will cost us \$5, if we are at all epicurean in our tastes. There are cries of "steward !" from all parts of the room—the word "waiter" is not considered sufficiently respectful, seeing that the waiter may have been a lawyer or merchant's clerk a few months before. The dishes look very small as they are placed on the table, but they are skilfully cooked and very palatable to men that have ridden in from the diggings. The appetite one acquires in California is something remarkable. For two months after my arrival, my sensations were like those of a famished wolf.

In the matter of dining, the tastes of all nations can be gratified here. There are French restaurants on the plaza and on Dupont street ; an extensive German establishment on Pacific street ; the *Fonda Peruana* ; the Italian Confectionary ; and three Chinese

houses, denoted by their long three-cornered flags of yellow silk. The latter are much frequented by Americans, on account of their excellent cookery, and the fact that meals are \$1 each, without regard to quantity. Kong-Sung's house is near the water; Whang-Tong's in Sacramento Street, and Tong-Ling's in Jackson street. There the grave Celestials serve up their chow-chow and curry, besides many genuine English dishes; their tea and coffee cannot be surpassed.

The afternoon is less noisy and active than the forenoon. Merchants keep within-doors, and the gambling-rooms are crowded with persons who step in to escape the wind and dust. The sky takes a cold gray cast, and the hills over the bay are barely visible in the dense, dusty air. Now and then a watcher, who has been stationed on the hill above Fort Montgomery, comes down and reports an inward-bound vessel, which occasions a little excitement among the boatmen and the merchants who are awaiting consignments. Towards sunset, the plaza is nearly deserted; the wind is merciless in its force, and a heavy overcoat is not found unpleasantly warm. As it grows dark, there is a lull, though occasional gusts blow down the hill and carry the dust of the city out among the shipping.

The appearance of San Francisco at night, from the water, is unlike anything I ever beheld. The houses are mostly of canvas, which is made transparent by the lamps within, and transforms them, in the darkness, to dwellings of solid light. Seated on the slopes of its three hills, the tents pitched among the chapparal to the very summits, it gleams like an amphitheatre of fire. Here and there shine out brilliant points, from the decoy-lamps of the gaming-houses; and through the indistinct murmur of the streets comes by fits the sound of music from their hot and crowded pre-

sincts. The picture has in it something unreal and fantastic, it impresses one like the cities of the magic lantern, which a motion of the hand can build or annihilate.

The only objects left for us to visit are the gaming-tables, whose day has just fairly dawned. We need not wander far in search of *ne*. Denison's Exchange, the Parker House and Eldorado stand side by side; across the way are the Verandah and Aguila de Oro; higher up the plaza the St. Charles and Bella Union; while dozens of second-rate establishments are scattered through the less frequented streets. The greatest crowd is about the Eldorado; we find it difficult to effect an entrance. There are about eight tables in the room, all of which are thronged; copper-hued Kanakas, Mexicans rolled in their sarapes and Peruvians thrust through their ponchos, stand shoulder to shoulder with the brown and bearded American miners. The stakes are generally small, though when the bettor gets into "a streak of luck," as it is called, they are allowed to double until all is lost or the bank breaks. Along the end of the room is a spacious bar, supplied with all kinds of bad liquors, and in a sort of gallery, suspended under the ceiling, a female violinist tasks her talent and strength of muscle to minister to the excitement of play.

The Verandah, opposite, is smaller, but boasts an equal attraction in a musician who has a set of Pandean pipes fastened at his hip, a drum on his back, which he beats with sticks at his elbows, and cymbals in his hands. The piles of coin on the monte tables link merrily to his playing, and the throng of spectators, jammed together in a sweltering mass, walk up to the bar between the tunes and drink out of sympathy with his dry and breathless throat. At the Aguila de Oro there is a full band of Ethiopian serenaders, and at the other halls, violins, guitars or wheezy accordeons, as

the case may be. The atmosphere of these places is rank with tobacco-smoke, and filled with a feverish, stifling heat, which communicates an unhealthy glow to the faces of the players.

We shall not be deterred from entering by the heat and smoke or the motley characters into whose company we shall be thrown. There are rare chances here for seeing human nature in one of its most dark and exciting phases. Note the variety of expression in the faces gathered around this table ! They are playing monte, the favorite game in California, since the chances are considered more equal and the opportunity of false play very slight. The dealer throws out his cards with a cool, nonchalant air ; indeed, the gradual increase of the hollow square of dollars at his left hand is not calculated to disturb his equanimity. The two Mexicans in front, muffled in their dirty sarapes, put down their half-dollars and dollars and see them lost, without changing a muscle. Gambling is a born habit with them, and they would lose thousands with the same indifference. Very different is the demeanor of the Americans who are playing ; their good or ill luck is betrayed at once by involuntary exclamations and changes of countenance, unless the stake should be very large and absorbing, when their anxiety, though silent, may be read with no less certainty. They have no power to resist the fascination of the game. Now counting their winnings by thousands, now dependent on the kindness of a friend for a few dollars to commence anew, they pass hour after hour in those hot, unwholesome dens. There is no appearance of arms, but let one of the players, impatient with his losses and maddened by the poisonous fluids he has drank, threaten one of the profession, and there will be no scarcity of knives and revolvers.

There are other places, where gaming is carried on privately

and to a more ruinous extent—rooms in the rear of the Parker House, in the City Hotel and other places, frequented only by the initiated. Here the stakes are almost unlimited, the players being men of wealth and apparent respectability. Frequently, in the absorbing interest of some desperate game the night goes by unheeded and morning breaks upon haggard faces and reckless hearts. Here are lost, in a few turns of a card or rolls of a ball, the product of fortunate ventures by sea or months of racking labor on land. How many men, maddened by continual losses, might exclaim in their blind vehemence of passion, on leaving these hells :

“Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods
In general synod, take away her power ;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends !”

CHAPTER XIII.

INCIDENTS OF A WALK TO MONTEREY.

I STAYED but four or five days in San Francisco on my return from the Convention, elected to form a constitution for California, was then in session at Monterey, and, partly as an experiment, partly for economy's sake, I determined to make the journey of one hundred and thirty miles on foot. Pedestrianism in California, however, as I learned by this little experience, is something more of a task than in most countries, one being obliged to carry his hotel with him. The least possible bedding is a Mexican sarape, which makes a burdensome addition to a knapsack, and a loaf of bread and flask of water are inconvenient, when the mercury stands at 90°. Besides, the necessity of pushing forward many miles to reach "grass and water" at night, is not very pleasant to the foot-sore and weary traveler. A mule, with all his satanic propensities, is sometimes a very convenient animal.

Dressed in a complete suit of corduroy, with a shirt of purple flannel and boots calculated to wear an indefinite length of time, I left San Francisco one afternoon, waded through the three miles of deep sand to the Mission, crossed the hills and reached Sanchez' Rancho a little after dark. I found the old man, who is said to dislike the Americans most cordially, very friendly. He

set before me a supper of beef stewed in red-peppers and then gave me a bed—an actual bed—and, wonder of wonders! without fleas. Not far from Sanchez there is a large adobe house, the ruins of a former Mission, in the neighborhood of which I noticed a grove of bay-trees. They were of a different species from the Italian bay, and the leaves gave out a most pungent odor. Some of the trees were of extraordinary size, the trunk being three feet in diameter. They grew along the banks of a dry arroyo, and had every appearance of being indigenous. I found the *jornada* of twenty-five miles to Secondini's Rancho, extremely fatiguing in the hot sun. I entered the rancho panting, threw my knapsack on the floor and inquired of a handsome young Californian, dressed in blue calzoneros: "Can you give me anything to eat?" "*Nada—nad-i-t-a!*" he answered, sharpening out the sound with an expression which meant, as plain as words could say it: "nothing; not even the little end of nothing!"

I was too hungry to be satisfied with this reply, and commenced an inventory of all the articles on hand. I found plenty of French brandy, *mescal* and various manufactured wines, which I rejected; but my search was at last rewarded by a piece of bread, half a Dutch cheese and a bottle of ale, nearly all of which soon disappeared. Towards night, some of the vaqueros brought in a cow with a lariat around her horns, threw her on the ground and plunged a knife into her breast. A roaring fire was already kindled behind the house, and the breath had not been many seconds out of the cow's body, before pieces of meat, slashed from her flank, were broiling on the coals. When about half cooked, they were snatched out, dripping with the rich, raw juices of the animal, and eaten as a great delicacy. One of the vaqueros handed me a large slice, which I found rather tough, but so remarkably sweet

and nutritious that I ate it, feeling myself at the time little better than a wolf.

I left Secondini's at daybreak and traveled twelve miles to the Mission of Santa Clara, where, not being able to obtain breakfast, I walked into the garden and made a meal of pears and the juicy fruit of the cactus. Thence to Pueblo San José, where I left the road I had already traveled, and took the broad highway running southward, up the valley of San José. The mountains were barely visible on either side, through the haze, and the road, perfectly level, now passed over wide reaches of grazing land, now crossed park-like tracts, studded with oaks and sycamores—a charming interchange of scenery. I crossed the dry bed of Coyote Creek several times, and reached Capt. Fisher's Rancho as it was growing dusk, and a passing traveler warned me to look out for bears.

Capt. Fisher, who is married to a Californian lady and has lived many years in the country, has one of the finest ranches in the valley, containing four square leagues of land, or about eighteen thousand acres. There are upon it eighteen streams or springs, two small orchards, and a vineyard and garden. He purchased it at auction about three years since for \$3,000, which was then considered a high price, but since the discovery of gold he has been offered \$80,000 for it. I was glad to find, from the account he gave me of his own experience as a farmer, that my first impressions of the character of California as an agricultural country, were fully justified. The barren, burnt appearance of the plains during the summer season misled many persons as to the value of the country in this respect. From all quarters were heard complaints of the torrid heat and arid soil under which large rivers dry up and vegetation almost entirely disappears. The

possibility of raising good crops of any kind was vehemently denied, and the bold assertion made that the greater part of California is worthless, except for grazing purposes. Capt. Fisher informed me, however, that there is no such wheat country in the world. Even with the imperfect plowing of the natives, which does little more than scratch up the surface of the ground, it produces a hundred-fold. Not only this, but, without further cultivation, a large crop springs up on the soil the second and sometimes even the third year. Capt. Fisher knew of a ranchero who sowed twenty fanegas of wheat, from which he harvested one thousand and twenty fanegas. The second year he gathered from the same ground eight hundred fanegas, and the third year six hundred. The unvarying dryness of the climate after the rains have ceased preserves grain of all kinds from rot, and perhaps from the same circumstance, the Hessian fly is unknown. The mountainsides, to a considerable extent, are capable of yielding fine crops of wheat, barley and rye, and the very summits and ravines on which the wild oats grow so abundantly will of course give a richer return when they have been traversed by the plow.

Corn grows upon the plains, but thrives best in the neighborhood of streams. It requires no irrigation, and is not planted until after the last rain has fallen. The object of this, however, is to avoid the growth of weeds, which, were it planted earlier, would soon choke it, in the absence of a proper system of farming. The use of the common cultivator would remove this difficulty, and by planting in March instead of May, an abundant crop would be certain. I saw several hundred acres which Capt. Fisher had on his ranche. The ears were large and well filled, and the stalks, though no rain had fallen for four months, were as green and fresh as in our fields at home. Ground which has been

plowed and planted, though it shows a dry crust on the top, retains its moisture to within six inches of the surface; while close beside it, and on the same level, the uncultured earth is seamed with heat, and vegetation burned up. The valley of San José is sixty miles in length, and contains at least five hundred square miles of level plain, nearly the whole of which is capable of cultivation. In regard to climate and situation, it is one of the most favored parts of California, though the valleys of Sonoma, Napa, Bodega, and nearly the whole of the Sacramento country, are said to be equally fertile.

Vegetables thrive luxuriantly, and many species, such as melons, pumpkins, squashes, beans, potatoes, etc., require no further care than the planting. Cabbages, onions, and all others which are transplanted in the spring, are obliged to be irrigated. Grape vines in some situations require to be occasionally watered; when planted on moist slopes, they produce without it. A Frenchman named Vigne made one hundred barrels of wine in one year, from a vineyard of about six acres, which he cultivates at the Mission San José. Capt. Fisher had a thousand vines in his garden, which were leaning on the earth from the weight of their fruit. Many of the clusters weighed four and five pounds, and in bloom, richness and flavor rivaled the choicest growth of Tuscany or the Rhine. The vine will hereafter be an important product of California, and even Burgundy and Tokay may be superseded on the tables of the luxurious by the vintage of San José and Los Angeles.

Before reaching Fisher's Rancho, I noticed on my left a bold spur striking out from the mountain-range. It terminated in a bluff, and both the rock and soil were of the dark-red color of Egyptian porphyry, denoting the presence of cinnabar, the ore of

quicksilver The veins of this metal contained in the mountain are thought to be equal to those of the mines of Santa Clara which are on the opposite side of the valley, about eight miles from Pueblo San José.

The following morning I resumed my walk up the valley. The soft, cloudless sky—the balmy atmosphere—the mountain ranges on either hand, stretching far before me until they vanished in purple haze—the sea-like sweep of the plain, with its islands and shores of dark-green oak, and the picturesque variety of animal life on all sides, combined to form a landscape which I may have seen equalled but never surpassed. Often, far in advance beyond the belts of timber, a long blue headland would curve out from the mountains and seem to close up the beautiful plain; but after the road had crossed its point, another and grander plain expanded for leagues before the eye. Nestled in a warm nook on the sunny side of one of these mountain capes, I found the ranche of Mr. Murphy, commanding a splendid prospect. Beyond the house and across a little valley, rose the conical peak of El Toro, an isolated mountain which served as a landmark from San José nearly to Monterey.

I was met at the door by Mr. Ruckel of San Francisco, who, with Mr. Everett of New York, had been rustivating a few days in the neighborhood. They introduced me to Mr. Murphy and his daughter, Ellen, both residents of the country for the last six years. Mr. Murphy, who is a native of Ireland, emigrated from Missouri, with his family, in 1843. He owns nine leagues of land (forty thousand acres) in the valley, and his cottage is a well-known and welcome resting-place to all the Americans in the country. During the war he remained on the ranche in company with his daughter, notwithstanding Castro's troops were scouring the

country, and all other families had moved to the Pueblo for protection. His three sons were at the same time volunteers under Frémont's command.

After dinner Mr. Murphy kindly offered to accompany me to the top of El Toro. Two horses were driven in from the cabalada and saddled, and on these we started, at the usual sweeping peed. Reaching the foot of the mountain, the lithe and spirited animals climbed its abrupt side like goats, following the windings of cattle-paths up the rocky ridges and through patches of stunted oak and chapparal, till finally, bathed in sweat and panting with the toil, they stood on the summit. We looked on a vast and wonderful landscape. The mountain rose like an island in the sea of air, so far removed from all it overlooked, that everything was wrapped in a subtle violet haze, through which the features of the scene seemed grander and more distant than the reality. West of us, range behind range, ran the Coast Mountains, parted by deep, wild valleys, in which we could trace the course of streams, shaded by the pine and the giant redwood. On the other side, the valley of San José, ten miles in width, lay directly at our feet, extending to the North and South, beyond point and headland, till either extremity was lost in the distance. The unvarying yellow hue of mountain and plain, except where they were traversed by broad belts of dark green timber, gave a remarkable effect to the view. It was not the color of barrenness and desolation and had no character of sadness or even monotony. Rather, glimmering through the mist, the mountains seemed to have arrayed themselves in cloth of gold, as if giving testimony of the royal metal with which their veins abound.

After enjoying this scene for some time, we commenced the descent. The peak slanted downward at an angle of 45° , which

rendered it toilsome work for our horses. I was about half-way down the summit-cone, when my saddle, slipping over the horse's shoulders, suddenly dropped to his ears. I was shot forward and alighted on my feet two or three yards below, fortunately retaining the end of the lariat in my hand. For a few minutes we performed a very spirited *pas de deux* on the side of the mountain, but Mr Murphy coming to my assistance, the horse was finally quieted and re-saddled. The afternoon was by this time far advanced, and I accepted Mr. Murphy's invitation to remain for the night. His pleasant family circle was increased in the evening by the arrival of Rev. Mr. Dowiat, a Catholic Missionary from Oregon, who gave us an account of the Indian massacre the previous winter. He was on the spot the day of its occurrence and assisted in interring the bodies of Dr. Whitman and his fellow-victims.

I traveled slowly the next day, for the hot sand and unaccustomed exercise were beginning to make some impression on my feet. Early in the afternoon I reached some *milpas* standing in the middle of a cornfield. A handsome young *ranchero* came dashing up on a full gallop, stopping his horse with a single bound as he neared me. I asked him the name of the ranche, and whether he could give me a dinner. "It is Castro's Ranche," he replied; "and I am a Castro. If you want water-melons, or dinner either, don't go to the other *milpas*, for they have nothing: *venga!*" and off he started, dashing through the corn and over the melon patches, as if they were worthless sand. I entered the *milpa*, which resembled an enormous wicker crate. In default of chairs I sat upon the ground, and very soon a dish of tortillas, one of boiled corn and another of jerked beef, were set before me. There was no need of knives and forks; I watched the heir of the Castros, placed a tortilla on one knee and plied my fingers with an assiduity

equal to his own, so that between us there was little left of the repast. He then picked out two melons from a large pile, rolled them to me, and started away again, doubtless to chase down more customers.

The road crossed the dry bed of a river, passed some meadows of fresh green grass and entered the hills on the western side of the valley. After passing the divide, I met an old Indian, traveling on foot, of whom I asked the distance to San Juan. His reply in broken Spanish was given with a comical brevity: "San Juan—two leagues—you sleep—I sleep rancho—you walk—I walk, *anda, vamos!*" and pointing to the sun to signify that it was growing late, he trudged off with double speed. By sunset I emerged from the mountains, waded the Rio Pajaro, and entered on the valley of San Juan, which stretched for leagues before me, as broad and beautiful as that I had left. The road, leading directly across it, seemed endless; I strained my eyes in vain looking for the Mission. At last a dark spot appeared some distance ahead of me. "Pray heaven," thought I, "that you be either a house, and stand still, or a man, and come forward." It was an Indian vaquero, who pointed out a dark line, which I could barely discern through the dusk. Soon afterwards the sound of a bell, chiming vespers, broke on the silence, but I was still more weary before I reached the walls where it swung.

At the inn adjoining the Mission I found Rev. Mr. Hunt, Col Stewart, Capt. Simmons and Mr. Harrison, of San Francisco. We had beds, but did not sleep much; few travelers, in fact, sleep at any of the Missions, on account of the dense population. In the morning I made a sketch of the ruined building, filled my pockets with pears in the orchard, and started up a cañada to cross the mountains to the plain of Salinas River. It was a mule-path,

impracticable for wagons, and leading directly up the face of the dividing ridge. Clumps of the madrono—a native evergreen, with large, glossy leaves, and trunk and branches of bright purple—filled the ravines, and dense thickets of a shrub with a snow-white berry lined the way. From the summit there was a fine mountain-view, sloping off on either hand into the plains of San Juan and Salinas.

Along this road, since leaving San José, I met constantly with companies of emigrants from the Gila, on their way to the diggings. Many were on foot, having had their animals taken from them by the Yuma Indians at the crossing of the Colorado. They were wild, sun-burned, dilapidated men, but with strong and hardy frames, that were little affected by the toils of the journey. Some were mounted on mules which had carried them from Texas and Arkansas; and two of the Knickerbocker Company, having joined their teams to a wagon, had begun business by filling it with vegetables at the Mission, to sell again in the gold district. In a little glen I found a party of them camped for a day or two to wash their clothes in a pool which had drained from the meadows above. The companies made great inroads on my progress by questioning me about the gold region. None of them seemed to have any very definite plan in their heads. It was curious to note their eagerness to hear "golden reports" of the country, every one of them betraying, by his questioning, the amount of the fortune he secretly expected to make. "Where would you advise me to go?" was the first question. I evaded the responsibility of a direct answer, and gave them the general report of the yield on all the rivers. "How much can I dig in a day?" This question was so absurd, as I could know nothing of the physical strength, endurance or geological knowledge of the emigrant, that I invariably refused to

make a random answer, telling them it depended entirely on themselves. But there was no escaping in this manner. "Well, how much do you *think* I can dig in a day?" was sure to follow, and I was obliged to satisfy them by replying: "Perhaps a dollar's worth, perhaps five pounds, perhaps nothing!"

They spoke of meeting great numbers of Sonorians on their way some—some of whom had attempted to steal their mules and provisions. Others, again, who had reached the country quite destitute, were kindly treated by them. The Yuma and Maricopa Indians were the greatest pests on the route. They had met with no difficulty in passing through the Apache country, and, with the exception of some little thieving, the Pimos tribes had proved friendly. The two former tribes, however, had united their forces, which amounted to two thousand warriors, and taken a hostile position among the hills near the Colorado crossing. There had been several skirmishes between them and small bodies of emigrants, in which men were killed on both sides. A New York Company lost five of its members in this manner. Nearly all the persons I met had been seven months on the way. They reported that there were about ten thousand persons on the Gila, not more than half of whom had yet arrived in California. Very few of the original companies held together, most of them being too large for convenience.

Descending a long cañada in the mountains, I came out at the great Salinas Plain. At an Indian ranche on the last slope, several cart-loads of melons were heaped beside the door, and I ate two or three in company with a traveler who rode up, and who proved to be a spy employed by Gen. Scott in the Mexican campaign. He was a small man, with a peculiar, keen gray eye, and a physiognomy thoroughly adapted for concealing all that was

passing in his mind. His hair was long and brown, and his beard unshorn; he was, in fact, a genuine though somewhat diminutive type of Harvey Birch, differing from him likewise in a courteous freedom of manner which he had learned by long familiarity with Spanish habits. While we sat, slicing the melons and draining their sugary juice, he told me a story of his capture by the Mexicans, after the battles in the Valley. He was carried to Queretaro, tried and sentenced to be shot, but succeeded in bribing the sergeant of the guard, through whose means he succeeded in escaping the night before the day of execution. The sergeant's wife, who brought his meals to the prison in a basket, left with him the basket, a *rebosa* and petticoat, in which he arrayed himself, after having shaved off his long beard, and passed out unnoticed by the guard. A good horse was in waiting, and he never slackened rein until he reached San Juan del Rio, eleven leagues from Queretaro.

To strike out on the plain was like setting sail on an unknown sea. My companion soon sank below the horizon, while I, whose timbers were somewhat strained, labored after him. I had some misgivings about the road, but followed it some four or five miles, when, on trying the course with a compass, I determined to leave it and take the open plain. I made for a faint speck far to the right, which, after an hour's hard walking showed itself to be a deserted ranche, beside an *ojo de agua*, or marshy spring. Fortunately, I struck on another road, and perseveringly followed it till dusk, when I reached the ranche of Thomas Blanco, on the bank of the Salinas River. Harvey Birch was standing in the door, having arrived an hour before me. Tortillas and frijoles were smoking on the table—a welcome sight to a hungry man! Mr Blanco, who treated us with genuine kindness, then gave us

good beds, and I went to sleep with the boom of the surf on the shore of the distant bay ringing in my ears.

Mr. Blanco, who is married to a Californian woman, has been living here several years. His accounts of the soil and climate fully agreed with what I had heard from other residents. There is a fine garden on the ranche, but during his absence at the placers in the summer, all the vegetables were carried away by a band of Sonorians, who loaded his pack-mules with them and drove them off. They would even have forcibly taken his wife and her sister with them, had not some of her relatives fortunately arrived in time to prevent it.

I was so lame and sore the next morning, that I was fain to be helped over the remaining fifteen miles to Monterey, by the kind offer of Mr. Shew of Baltimore, who gave me a seat in his wagon. The road passed over sand-hills, covered only with chapparal, and good for nothing except as a shooting-ground for partridges and hares. The view of the town as you approach, opening through a gap between two low, piny hills, is very fine. Though so far inferior to San Francisco in size, the houses were all substantially built, and did not look as if they would fly off in a gale of wind. They were scattered somewhat loosely over a gentle slope, behind which ran a waving outline of pine-covered mountains. On the right hand appeared the blue waters of the bay, with six or seven vessels anchored near the shore. The American flag floated gaily in the sunshine above the fort on the bluff and the Government offices in the town, and prominent among the buildings on the high ground stood the Town Hall—a truly neat and spacious edifice of yellow stone, in which the Constitutional Convention was then sitting.

In spite of the additional life which this body gave to the place,

my first impression was that of a deserted town. Few people were stirring in the streets ; business seemed dull and stagnant ; and after hunting half an hour for a hotel, I learned that there was none. In this dilemma I luckily met my former fellow-traveler, Major Smith, who asked me to spread my blanket in his room, in the *cuartel*, or Government barracks. I willingly complied, glad to find a place of rest after a foot-journey which I declared should be my last in California.

CHAPTER XIV.

LIFE IN MONTEREY.

MAJOR SMITH, who was Paymaster for the stations of Monterey and San Diego, had arrived only a few days previous, from the latter place. He was installed in a spacious room in the upper story of the *cuartel*, which by an impromptu partition of muslin, was divided into an office and bedroom. Two or three empty freight-boxes, furnished as a great favor by the Quarter Master, served as desk, table and wash-stand. There were just three chairs for the Major, his brother and myself, so that when we had a visit, one of us took his seat on a box. The only bedding I brought from San Francisco was a sarape, which was insufficient, but with some persuasion we obtained a soldier's pallet and an armful of straw, out of which we made a comfortable bed. We were readily initiated into the household mysteries of sweeping, dusting, etc., and after a few days' practice felt competent to take charge of a much larger establishment.

I took my meals at the *Fonda de la Union*, on the opposite side of the street. It was an old, smoky place not uncomfortably clean, with a billiard-room and two small rooms adjoining, where the owner, a sallow Mexican, with his Indian cook and *muchacho* entertained his customers. The place was frequented by a num

ber of the members and clerks of the Convention, by all rambling Americans or Californians who happened to be in Monterey, and occasionally a seaman or two from the ships in the harbor. The charges were usually \$1 per meal ; for which we were furnished with an *olla* of boiled beef, cucumbers and corn, an *asado* of beef and red-pepper, a *guisado* of beef and potatoes, and two or three cups of execrable coffee. At the time of my arrival this was the only restaurant in the place, and reaped such a harvest of *pesos*, that others were not long in starting up.

There was one subject, which at the outset occasioned us many sleepless nights. In vain did we attempt to forego the contemplation of it ; as often as we lay down on our pallets, the thought would come uncalled, and very soon we were writhing under its attacks as restlessly as Richard on his ghost-haunted couch. It was no imaginary disturbance ; it assailed us on all sides, and without cessation. It was an annoyance by no means peculiar to California ; it haunts the temples of the Incas and the halls of the Montezumas ; I have felt it come upon me in the Pantheon of Rome, and many a traveler has bewailed its visitation while sleeping in the shadow of the Pyramid. Nothing is more positively real to the feelings, nothing more elusive and intangible to the search. You look upon the point of its attack, and you see it not, you put your finger on it, and it is not there !

We tried all the means in our power to procure a good night's rest. We swept out the room, shook out the blankets and tucked ourselves in so skillfully that we thought no flea could effect an entrance—but in vain. At last, after four nights of waking torment, I determined to give up the attempt ; I had become so nervous by repeated failures that the thought of it alone would have prevented sleep. At bed-time, therefore, I took my blankets,

and went up into the pine woods behind the town. I chose a warm corner between some bushes and a fallen log; the air was misty and chill and the moon clouded over, but I lay sheltered and comfortable on my pillow of dry sticks. Occasionally a partridge would stir in the bushes by my head or a squirrel rustle among the dead leaves, while far back in the gloomy shadows of the forest the coyotes kept up an endless howl. I slept but indifferently, for two or three fleas had escaped the blanket-shaking, and did biting enough for fifty.

After many trials, I finally nonplussed them in spite of all their cunning. There is a thick green shrub in the forest, whose powerful balsamic odor is too much for them. After sweeping the floor and sprinkling it with water, I put down my bed, previously well shaken, and surrounded it with a chevaux-de-frise of this shrub, wide enough to prevent their overleaping it. Thus moated and palisaded from the foe, I took my rest unbroken, to his utter discomfiture.

Every day that I spent in Monterey, I found additional cause to recede from my first impression of the dullness of the place. Quiet it certainly is, to one coming from San Francisco; but it is only dull in the sense that Nice and Pisa are dull cities. The bustle of trade is wanting, but to one not bent on gold-hunting, a delicious climate, beautiful scenery, and pleasant society are a full compensation. Those who stay there for any length of time, love the place before they leave it—which would scarcely be said of San Francisco.

The situation of Monterey is admirable. The houses are built on a broad, gentle slope of land, about two miles from Point Pinos, the southern extremity of the bay. They are scattered over an extent of three quarters of a mile, leaving ample room

for the growth of the town for many years to come. The outline of the hills in the rear is somewhat similar to those of Staten Island, but they increase in height as they run to the south-east, till at the distance of four miles they are merged in the high mountains of the Coast Range. The northern shore of the bay is twenty miles distant, curving so far to the west, that the Pacific is not visible from any part of the town. Eastward, a high, rocky ridge, called the Toro Mountains, makes a prominent object in the view, and when the air is clear the Sierra de Gavilán, beyond the Salinas plains, is distinctly visible.

During my visit the climate was mild and balmy beyond that of the same season in Italy. The temperature was that of mid-May at home, the sky for the greater part of the time without a cloud, and the winds as pleasant as if tempered exactly to the warmth of the blood. A thermometer hanging in my room only varied between 52° and 54° , which was about 10° lower than the air without. The siroccos of San Francisco are unknown in Monterey; the mornings are frequently foggy, but it always clears about ten o'clock, and remains so till near sunset. The sky at noonday is a pure, soft blue.

The harbor of Monterey is equal to any in California. The bight in which vessels anchor is entirely protected from the north-westers by Sea-Gull Point, and from the south-eastern winds by mountains in the rear. In the absence of light-houses, the dense fog renders navigation dangerous on this coast, and in spite of an entrance twenty-five miles in breadth, vessels frequently run below Point Pinos, and are obliged to anchor on unsafe ground in Carmel Bay. A road leads from the town over the hills to the ex-Mission of Carmel, situated at the head of the bay, about four miles distant. Just beyond it is Point Lobos, a promontory on

the coast, famous for the number of seals and sea-lions which congregate there at low tide. A light-house on Point Pinos and another on Point Lobos would be a sufficient protection to navigation for the present, and I understand that the agents of the Government have recommended their erection.

The trade of Monterey is rapidly on the increase. During my stay of five weeks, several houses were built, half a dozen stores opened and four hotels established, one of which was kept by a Chinaman. There were at least ten arrivals and departures of vessels, exclusive of the steamers, within that time, and I was credibly informed that the Collector of the Port had, during the previous five months, received about \$150,000 in duties. Provisions of all kinds are cheaper than at San Francisco, but merchandize brings higher prices. At the Washington House, kept by a former private in Col. Stevenson's regiment, I obtained excellent board at \$12 per week. The building, which belongs to an Italian named Alberto Tusconi, rented for \$1,200 monthly. Rents of all kinds were high, \$200 a month having been paid for rooms during the session of the Convention. Here, as in San Francisco, there are many striking instances of sudden prosperity. Mr. Tusconi, whom I have just mentioned, came out five years before, as a worker in tin. He was without money, but obtained the loan of some sheets of tin, which he manufactured into cups and sold. From this beginning he had amassed a fortune of \$50,000, and was rapidly adding to his gains.

There was a good deal of speculation in lots, and many of the sales, though far short of the extravagant standard of San Francisco, were still sufficiently high. A lot seventy-five feet by twenty-five, with a small frame store upon it, was sold for \$5,000. A one-story house, with a lot about fifty by seventy-five feet, in

the outskirts of the town, was held at \$6,000. This was about the average rate of property, and told well for a town which a year previous was deserted, and which, only six months before, contained no accommodations of any kind for the traveler.

There is another circumstance which will greatly increase the commercial importance of Monterey. The discoveries of gold mines and placers on the Mariposa, and the knowledge that gold exists in large quantities on the Lake Fork, King's River and the Pituiuna—streams which empty into the Tularé Lakes on their eastern side—will hereafter attract a large portion of the mining population into that region. Hitherto, the hostility of the Indians in the southern part of the Sierra Nevada, and the richness of more convenient localities, have hindered the gold diggers from going beyond the Mariposa. The distance of these rivers from San Francisco, and the great expense of transporting supplies to the new mining district, will naturally direct a portion of the importing trade to some more convenient seaport. Monterey, with the best anchorage on the coast, is one hundred and twenty-five miles nearer the Tularé Lakes. By bridging a few arroyos, an excellent wagon road can be made through a pass in the Coast Range, into the valley of San Joaquin, opening a direct communication with the southern placers.

The removal of the Seat of Government to the Pueblo San José, will not greatly affect the consequence of the place. The advantages it has lost, are, at most, a slight increase of population, and the custom of the Legislature during its session. This will be made up in a different way; a large proportion of the mining population, now in the mountains, will come down to the coast to winter and recruit themselves after the hardships of the Fall digging. Of these, Monterey will attract the greater portion

as well from the salubrity of its climate as the comparative cheapness of living. The same advantages will cause it to be preferred, hereafter, as the residence of those who have retired from their golden labors. The pine-crowned slopes back of the town contain many sites of unsurpassed beauty for private residences.

With the exception of Los Angeles, Monterey contains the most pleasant society to be found in California. There is a circle of families, American and native, residing there, whose genial and refined social character makes one forget his previous ideas of California life. In spite of the lack of cultivation, except such instruction as the priests were competent to give, the native population possesses a natural refinement of manner which would grace the most polished society. They acknowledge their want of education; they tell you they grow as the trees, with the form and character that Nature gives them; but even uncultured Nature in California wears all the ripeness and maturity of older lands. I have passed many agreeable hours in the houses of the native families. The most favorite resort of Americans is that of Doña Augusta Ximeno, the sister of Don Pablo de la Guerra. This lady, whose active charity in aiding the sick and distressed has won her the enduring gratitude of many and the esteem of all, has made her house the home of every American officer who visits Monterey. With a rare liberality, she has given up a great part of it to their use, when it was impossible for them to procure quarters, and they have always been welcome guests at her table. She is a woman whose nobility of character, native vigor and activity of intellect, and above all, whose instinctive refinement and winning grace of manner, would have given her a complete supremacy in society, had her lot been cast in Europe or the United States. During the session of the Convention, her house was the favorite

resort of all the leading members, both American and Californian. She was thoroughly versed in Spanish literature, as well as the works of Scott and Cooper, through translations, and I have frequently been surprised at the justness and elegance of her remarks on various authors. She possessed, moreover, all those bold and daring qualities which are so fascinating in a woman, when softened and made graceful by true feminine delicacy. She was a splendid horsewoman, and had even considerable skill in throwing the lariat.

The houses of Señor Soveranez and Señor Abrego were also much visited by Americans. The former gentleman served as a Captain in Mexico during the war, but since then has subsided into a good American citizen. Señor Abrego, who is of Mexican origin, was the most industrious Californian I saw in the country. Within a few years he had amassed a large fortune, which was in no danger of decreasing. I attended an evening party at his house, which was as lively and agreeable as any occasion of the kind well could be. There was a tolerable piano in his little parlor, on which a lady from Sydney, Australia, played "*Non piu mesta*" with a good deal of taste. Two American gentlemen gave us a few choice flute duetts, and the entertainment closed by a quadrille and polka, in which a little son of Señor Abrego figured, to the general admiration.

The old and tranquil look of Monterey, before the discovery of the placers, must have seemed remarkable to visitors from the Atlantic side of the Continent. The serene beauty of the climate and soft, vaporous atmosphere, have nothing in common with one's ideas of a new, scarce-colonized coast ; the animals, even, are those of the old, civilized countries of Europe. Flocks of ravens croak from the tiled roofs, and cluster on the long adobe walls ; magpies

chatter in the clumps of gnarled oak on the hills, and as you pass through the forest, hares start up from their coverts under the bearded pines. The quantity of blackbirds about the place is astonishing; in the mornings they wheel in squadrons about every ouse-top, and fill the air with their twitter.

But for the interest occasioned by the Convention, and the social impulse given to Monterey by the presence of its members, the town would hardly have furnished an incident marked enough to be remembered. Occasionally there was an arrival at the anchorage—generally from San Francisco, San Diego or Australia—which furnished talk for a day or two. Then some resident would give a fandango, which the whole town attended, or the Alcalde would decree a general *horn-burning*. This was nothing less than the collecting of all the horns and heads of slaughtered animals, scattered about the streets, into large piles, which burned through half the night, filling the air with a most unpleasant odor. When the atmosphere happened to be a little misty, the red light of these fires was thrown far up along the hills.

I learned some very interesting facts during my stay, relative to the products of California. Wisconsin has always boasted of raising the largest crops of talking humanity, but she will have to yield the palm to the new Pacific State, where the increase of population is entirely without precedent. A native was pointed out to me one day as the father of thirty-six children, twenty of whom were the product of his first marriage, and sixteen of his last. Mr. Hartnell, the Government translator, has a family of twenty-one children. Señor Abrego, who had been married twelve years, already counted as many heirs. Several other couples in the place had from twelve to eighteen; and the former number, I was told, is the usual size of a family in California. Whether or

not this remarkable fecundity is attributable to the climate, I am unable to tell.

The Californians, as a race, are vastly superior to the Mexicans. They have larger frames, stronger muscle, and a fresh, ruddy complexion, entirely different from the sallow skins of the tierra caliente or the swarthy features of those Bedouins of the West, the Sonorians. The families of pure Castilian blood resemble in features and build, the descendants of the Valencians in Chili and Mexico, whose original physical superiority over the natives of the other provinces of Spain, has not been obliterated by two hundred years of transplanting. Señor Soveranez informed me that the Californian soldiers, on account of this physical distinction, were nicknamed "Americanos" by the Mexicans. They have no national feeling in common with the latter, and will never forgive the cowardly deportment of the Sonorians toward them, during the recent war. Their superior valor, as soldiers, was amply experienced by our own troops, at the battle of San Pasquale.

I do not believe, however, that the majority of the native population rejoices at the national change which has come over the country. On the contrary, there is much jealousy and bitter feeling among the uneducated classes. The vast tides of emigration from the Atlantic States thrice outnumbered them in a single year, and consequently placed them forever in a hopeless minority. They witnessed the immediate extinction of their own political importance, and the introduction of a new language, new customs, and new laws. It is not strange that many of them should be opposed to us at heart, even while growing wealthy and prosperous under the marvellous change which has been wrought by the enterprise of our citizens. Nevertheless, we have many warm friends, and the United States many faithful subjects, among them. The

intelligent and influential faction which aided us during the war, is still faithful, and many who were previously discontented, are now loudest in their rejoicing. Our authorities have acted toward them with constant and impartial kindness. By pursuing a similar course, the future government of the State will soon obliterate the differences of race and condition, and all will then be equally Californian and American citizens.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STATE ORGANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA.

IN some respects, the political history of California for the year 1849, is without a parallel in the annals of any nation. The events are too recent for us to see them in the clear, defined outlines they will exhibit to posterity; we can only describe them as they occurred, throwing the strongest light on those points which now appear most prominent.

The discovery of the Gold Region of California occurred in little more than a month after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, by which the country was ceded to the United States. Congress having adjourned without making provision for any kind of civil organization, the Military Government established during the war continued in force, in conjunction with the local laws in force under the Mexican rule—a most incongruous state of things, which gave rise to innumerable embarrassments. Meanwhile, the results of the gold discovery produced a complete revolution in society, upturning all branches of trade, industry or office, and for a time completely annulling the Government. Mexico and the South American republics sent their thousands of adventurers into the country like a flood, far outnumbering the native population. During the winter of 1848-9, the state of affairs was most critical

the American and foreign miners were embittered against each other ; the authorities were without power to enforce their orders, and there seemed no check to restrain the free exercise of all lawless passions. There *was* a check, however—the steady integrity and inborn capacity for creating and upholding Law, of a portion of the old American settlers and emigrants newly arrived. A single spark of Order will in time irradiate and warm into shape a world of disorderly influences.

In the neglect of Congress to provide for the establishment of a Territorial Government, it was at first suggested that the People should provisionally organize such a Government among themselves. Various proposals were made, but before any decisive action was had on the subject, another and more appropriate form was given to the movement, chiefly through the labor and influence of a few individuals, who were countenanced by the existing authorities. This was, to call a Convention for the purpose of drafting a State Constitution, that California might at once be admitted into the Union, without passing through the usual Territorial stage—leaping with one bound, as it were, from a state of semi-civilization to be the Thirty-First Sovereign Republic of the American Confederacy. The vast influx of emigration had already increased the population beyond the required number, and the unparalleled speed with which Labor and Commerce were advancing warranted such a course, no less than the important natural resources of the country itself. The result of this movement was a proclamation from Gov. Riley, recommending that an election of Delegates to form such a Convention be held on the first of August, 1849.

Gen. Riley, the Civil Governor appointed by the United States, Gen. Smith, and Mr. T. Butler King, during a tour through the mining districts in the early part of summer, took every occasion

to interest the people in the subject, and stimulate them to hold preparatory meetings. The possibility of calling together and keeping together a body of men, many of whom must necessarily be deeply involved in business and speculation, was at first strongly doubted. In fact, in some of the districts named in the proclamation, scarcely any move was made till a few days before the day of election. It was only necessary, however, to kindle the flame; the intelligence and liberal public spirit existing throughout the country, kept it alive, and the election passed over with complete success. In one or two instances it was not held on the day appointed, but the Convention nevertheless admitted the delegates elected in such cases.

Party politics had but a small part to play in the choice of candidates. In the San Francisco and Sacramento districts there might have been some influences of this kind afloat, and other districts undoubtedly sent members to advocate some particular local interest. But, taken as a body, the delegates did honor to California, and would not suffer by comparison with any first State Convention ever held in our Republic. I may add, also, that a perfect harmony of feeling existed between the citizens of both races. The proportion of native Californian members to the American was about equal to that of the population. Some of the former received nearly the entire American vote—Gen. Valleje at Sonoma, Antonio Pico at San José, and Miguel de Pedreña at San Diego, for instance.

The elections were all over, at the time of my arrival in California, and the 1st of September had been appointed as the day on which the Convention should meet. It was my intention to have been present at that time, but I did not succeed in reaching Monterey until the 19th of the month. The Convention was not regularly

organized until the 4th, when Dr. Robert Semple, of the Sonoma District, was chosen President and conducted to his seat by Capt. Sutter and Gen. Vallejo. Capt. William G. Marcy, of the New-York Volunteer Regiment, was elected Secretary, after which the various post of Clerks, Assistant Secretaries, Translators, Doorkeeper, Sergeant-at-Arms, etc., were filled. The day after their complete organization, the officers and members of the Convention were sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. The members from the Southern Districts were instructed to vote in favor of a Territorial form of Government, but expressed their willingness to abide the decision of the Convention. An invitation was extended to the Clergy of Monterey to open the meeting with prayer, and that office was thenceforth performed on alternate days by Padre Ramirez and Rev. S. H. Willey.

The building in which the Convention met was probably the only one in California suited to the purpose. It is a handsome, two-story edifice of yellow sandstone, situated on a gentle slope, above the town. It is named "Colton Hall," on account of its having been built by Don Walter Colton, former Alcalde of Monterey, from the proceeds of a sale of city lots. The stone of which it is built is found in abundance near Monterey; it is of a fine, mellow color, easily cut, and will last for centuries in that mild climate. The upper story, in which the Convention sat, formed a single hall about sixty feet in length by twenty-five in breadth. A railing, running across the middle, divided the members from the spectators. The former were seated at four long tables, the President occupying a rostrum at the further end, over which were suspended two American flags and an extraordinary picture of Washington, evidently the work of a native artist. The appearance of the whole body was exceedingly dignified and

intellectual, and parliamentary decorum was strictly observed. A door in the centre of the hall opened on a square balcony, supported by four pillars, where some of the members, weary with debate, came frequently to enjoy the mild September afternoon, whose hues lay so softly on the blue waters of the bay.

The Declaration of Rights, which was the first subject before the Convention, occasioned little discussion. Its sections being general in their character and of a liberal republican cast, were nearly all adopted by a nearly unanimous vote. The clause prohibiting Slavery was met by no word of dissent; it was the universal sentiment of the Convention. It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the various provisions of the Constitution; it will be enough to say that they combined, with few exceptions, the most enlightened features of the Constitutions of older States. The election of Judges by the people—the rights of married women to property—the establishment of a liberal system of education—and other reforms of late introduced into the State Governments east of the Rocky Mountains, were all transplanted to the new soil of the Pacific Coast.

The adoption of a system of pay for the officers and members of the Convention, occasioned some discussion. The Californian members and a few of the Americans patriotically demanded that the Convention should work for nothing, the glory being sufficient. The majority overruled this, and finally decided that the members should receive \$16 per day, the President \$25, the Secretary and Interpreter \$28, the Clerks \$23 and \$18, the Chaplain \$16, the Sergeant-at-Arms \$22 and the Doorkeeper \$12. The expenses of the Convention were paid out of the "Civil Fund," an accumulation of the duties received at the ports. The funds were principally silver, and at the close of their labors it was

amusing to see the members carrying their pay about town tied up in handkerchiefs or slung in bags over their shoulders. The little Irish boy, who acted as page, was nearly pressed down by the weight of his wages.

One of the first exciting questions was a clause which had been crammed through the Convention on its first reading, prohibiting the entrance of free people of color into the state. Its originator was an Oregon man, more accustomed to and better fitted for squatter life than the dignity of legislation. The members, by the time it was brought up for second reading, had thought more seriously upon the question, and the clause was rejected by a large majority: several attempts to introduce it in a modified form also signally failed.

It was a matter of regret that the question of suffrage could not have been settled in an equitable and satisfactory manner. The article first adopted by the Convention, excluding Indians and Negroes, with their descendants, from the privilege of voting, was, indeed, modified by a proviso offered by Mr. de la Guerra, which gave the Legislature the power of admitting Indians or the descendants of Indians, by a two-thirds concurrent vote, to the right of suffrage. This was agreed to by many merely for the purpose of settling the question for the present; but the native members will not be content to let it rest. Many of the most wealthy and respectable families in California have Indian blood in their veins, and even a member of the Convention, Dominguez, would be excluded from voting under this very clause.

The Articles of the Constitution relating to the Executive, Judicial and Legislative Departments occupied several days, but the debates were dry and uninteresting. A great deal of talk was expended to no purpose, several of the members having the same

morbid ambition in this respect, as may be found in our legislative assemblies on this side of the mountains. A member from Sacramento severely tried the patience of the Convention by his long harangues ; another was clamorous, not for his own rights but those of his constituents, although the latter were suspected of being citizens of Oregon. The Chair occasionally made a bungling decision, whereupon two of the members, who had previously served in State Assemblies, would aver that in the whole course of their legislative experience they had never heard of such a thing. Now and then a scene occurred, which was amusing enough. A section being before the Convention, declaring that every citizen arrested for a criminal offence should be tried by a jury of his peers, a member, unfamiliar with such technical terms, moved to strike out the word "peers." "I don't like that word 'peers,'" said he ; "it a'int republican ; I'd like to know what we want with *peers* in this country—we're not a monarchy, and we've got no House of Parliament. I vote for no such law."

The boundary question, however, which came up towards the close of the Convention, assumed a character of real interest and importance. The great point of dispute on this question was the eastern limit of the State, the Pacific being the natural boundary on the West, the meridian of 42° on the North, and the Mexican line, run in conformity with the treaty of Queretaro, on the South. Mr. Hastings, a member from Sacramento, moved that the eastern boundary, beginning at the parallel of 42°, should follow the meridian of 118° W. long. to 38° N. thence running direct to the intersection of the Colorado with 114° W. following that river to the Mexican line. This was proposed late on Monday night, and hurried through by a bare majority. Messrs Gwin and Halleck, of the Boundary Committee, with all the Cali

fornian members, and some others, opposed this proposition, claiming that the original Spanish boundary, extending to the line of New Mexico, should be adopted. With some difficulty a reconsideration of the vote was obtained, and the House adjourned without settling the question.

The discussion commenced in earnest the next morning. The members were all present, and as the parties were nearly balanced the contest was very animated and excited. It assumed, in fact, more of a party character than any which had previously come up. The grounds taken by the party desiring the whole territory were that the Convention had no right to assume another boundary than that originally belonging to California; that the measure would extend the advantages and protecting power of law over a vast inland territory, which would otherwise remain destitute of such protection for many years to come; that, finally, it would settle the question of Slavery for a much greater extent of territory, and in a quiet and peaceful manner. The opposite party—that which advocates the Sierra Nevada as the boundary line—contended that the Constitution had no right to include the Mormon settlers in the Great Salt Lake country in a State, whose Constitution they had no share in forming, and that nearly the whole of the country east of the Sierra Nevada was little better than a desert.

After a hot discussion, which lasted the whole day, the vote was reversed, and the report of the Boundary Committee (including all the Territory as far as New Mexico) adopted. The opposition party, defeated after they were sure of success, showed their chagrin rather noisily. At the announcement of the vote, a dozen members jumped up, speaking and shouting in the most confused and disorderly manner. Some rushed out of the room

others moved an adjournment ; others again protested they would sign no Constitution, embodying such a provision. In the midst of this tumult the House adjourned. The defeated party were active throughout, and procured a second reconsideration. Major Hill, delegate from San Diego, then proposed the following boundary : a line starting from the Mexican Boundary and following the course of the Colorado to lat. 35° N., thence due north to the Oregon Boundary. Such a line, according to the opinion of both Capt. Sutter and Gen. Vallejo, was the limit set by the Mexican Government to the civil jurisdiction of California. It divides the Great Central Basin about two-thirds of the distance between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Salt Lake. This proposition was adopted, but fell through on second reading, when the boundary which had first passed was reädopted by a large vote. When it came to be designated on the map, most of the members were better satisfied than they had anticipated. They had a State with eight hundred miles of sea-coast and an average of two hundred and fifty miles in breadth, including both sides of the Sierra Nevada and some of the best rivers of the Great Basin. As to the question of Slavery, it will never occasion much trouble. The whole Central Region, extending to the Sierra Madre of New Mexico, will never sustain a slave population. The greater part of it resembles in climate and general features the mountain steppes of Tartary, and is better adapted for grazing than agriculture. It will never be settled so long as an acre of the rich loam of Oregon or the warm wheat-plains of California is left untenanted.

One of the subjects that came up about this time was the design of a Great Seal for the State. There were plenty of ideas in the heads of the members, but few draughtsmen, and of the eight

or ten designs presented, some were ludicrous enough. The choice finally fell upon one drawn by Major Garnett, which was, in reality, the best offered. The principal figure is Minerva, with her spear and Gorgon shield, typical of the manner in which California was born, full-grown, into the Confederacy. At her feet crouches a grizzly bear, certainly no very appropriate supporter for the Gorgon shield. The wheat-sheaf and vine before him illustrate the principal agricultural products of the country, and are in good keeping—for Ceres sat beside Minerva in the councils of the gods. Near at hand is a miner with his implements, in the distance the Bay of San Francisco, and still further the Sierra Nevada, over which appears the single word: "EUREKA!"

The discussion on the subject was most amusing. None of the designs seemed at first to tally with the taste of the Convention, as each district was anxious to be particularly represented. The Sacramento members wanted the gold mines; the San Francisco members wanted the harbor and shipping; the Sonoma members thought no seal could be lawful without some reminder of their voted "bear flag;" while the Los Angeles and San Diego members were clamorous for the rights of their vines, olives and wild horses—so that, no doubt, the seal they chose was the most satisfactory to all. The sum of \$1,000 was voted to Mr. Lyon, one of the Secretaries, for the purpose of having it engraved. The Convention also voted the sum of \$10,000 to Mr. J. Ross Browne, its reporter, on his contracting to furnish one thousand printed copies of the entire proceedings in English and three hundred in Spanish. This sum also included the remuneration for his labors as a stenographer.

After discussing various plans for meeting the expenses of the

State, at the outset, an ordinance was adopted, (subject to the action of Congress,) the substance of which was as follows :

1. One section out of every quarter township of the public lands shall be granted to the State for the use of the schools. 2. Seventy-two sections of unappropriated land within the State shall be granted to the State for the establishment and support of a University. 3. Four sections, selected under direction of the Legislature, shall be granted for the use of the State in establishing a Seat of Government and erecting buildings. 4. Five hundred thousand acres of public lands, in addition to the same amount granted to new States, shall be granted for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the State Government. And five per cent. of the proceeds of the sale of public lands, after deducting expenses, shall be given for the encouragement of learning. 5. All salt springs, with the land adjoining, shall be granted to the use of the State.

It may probably be thought, on reading these various provisions for the filling of the State Treasury, that the appetite for gold must surely grow by what it feeds on. California, nevertheless, had some reason for making so many exacting demands. The expenses of the Government, at the start, will necessarily be enormous ; and the price of labor so far exceeds the value of real estate, that the ordinary tax on property would scarcely be a drop in the bucket. The cost of erecting buildings and supporting the various branches of government will greatly surpass that to which any state has ever been subjected. In paying the expenses of the Convention from the Civil Fund, Gov. Riley in many instances took upon himself weighty responsibilities ; but the circumstances under which he acted were entirely without precedent. His course was marked throughout by great prudence and good sense

Towards the close of the Convention, those of the members who aspired to still further honor, commenced caucusing and the canvassing of influence for the coming election. Several announced themselves as candidates for various offices, and in spite of vehement disclaimers to the contrary the lines of old parties were secretly drawn. Nevertheless, it is impossible at present to pronounce correctly on the political character of the State; it will take some time for the native Californians to be drilled into the new harness, and I suspect they will frequently hold the balance of power.

One of the most intelligent and influential of the Californians is Gen. Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, whom I had the pleasure of meeting several times during my stay in Monterey. As Military Commandant, during the Governorship of Alvarado, he exercised almost supreme sway over the country. He is a man of forty-five years of age, tall and of a commanding presence; his head is large, forehead high and ample, and eyes dark, with a grave, dignified expression. He is better acquainted with our institutions and laws than any other native Californian.

Among the other notable members were Covarrubias, formerly Secretary of Government, and José Antonio Carrillo, the right-hand man of Pio Pico. The latter is upward of fifty-five years of age—a small man with frizzled hair and beard, gray eyes, and a face strongly expressive of shrewdness and mistrust. I saw him, one day, dining at a restaurant with Gen. Castro—the redoubtable leader of the Californian troops, in Upper and Lower California. Castro is a man of medium height, but stoutly and strongly made. He has a very handsome face; his eyes are large and dark, and his mouth is shaded by moustaches with the gloss and color of a raven's wing, meeting on each side with his whis-

kers He wore the sombrero, jacket and calzoneros of the country. His temperament, as I thought, seemed gloomy and saturnine, and I was gravely informed by a Californian who sat opposite me, that he meditated the reconquest of the country !

Capt. Sutter's appearance and manners quite agreed with my preconceived ideas of him. He is still the hale, blue-eyed, jovial German—short and stout of stature, with broad forehead, head bald to the crown, and altogether a ruddy, good-humored expression of countenance. He is a man of good intellect, excellent common sense and amiable qualities of heart. A little more activity and enterprise might have made him the first man in California, in point of wealth and influence.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CLOSING SCENES OF THE CONVENTION.

THE day and night immediately preceding the dissolution of the Convention far exceeded in interest all the former period of its existence. I know not how I can better describe the closing scenes than by the account which I penned on the spot, at the time :

The Convention yesterday (October 12) gave token of bringing its labors to a close ; the morning session was short and devoted only to the passing of various miscellaneous provisions, after which an adjournment was made until this morning, on account of the Ball given by the Convention to the citizens of Monterey. The members, by a contribution of \$25 each, raised the sum of \$1,100 to provide for the entertainment, which was got up in return for that given by the citizens about four weeks since.

The Hall was cleared of the forum and tables and decorated with young pines from the forest. At each end were the American colors, tastefully disposed across the boughs. Three chandeliers, neither of bronze nor cut-glass, but neat and brilliant withal, poured their light on the festivities. At eight o'clock—the fashionable ball-hour in Monterey—the guests began to assemble, and in an hour afterward the Hall was crowded with nearly all the

Californian and American residents. There were sixty or seventy ladies present, and an equal number of gentlemen, in addition to the members of the Convention. The dark-eyed daughters of Monterey, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara mingled in pleasing contrast with the fairer bloom of the trans-Nevadian belles. The variety of feature and complexion was fully equalled by the variety of dress. In the whirl of the waltz, a plain, dark, nun-like robe would be followed by one of pink satin and gauze; next, perhaps a bodice of scarlet velvet with gold buttons, and then a rich figured brocade, such as one sees on the stately dames of Titian.

The dresses of the gentlemen showed considerable variety, but were much less picturesque. A complete ball-dress was a happiness attained only by the fortunate few. White kids could not be had in Monterey for love or money, and as much as \$50 was paid by one gentleman for a pair of patent-leather boots. Scarcely a single dress that was seen belonged entirely to its wearer, and I thought, if the clothes had power to leap severally back to their respective owners, some persons would have been in a state of utter destitution. For my part, I was indebted for pantaloons and vest to obliging friends. The only specimen of the former article which I could get, belonged to an officer whose weight was considerably more than two hundred, but I managed to accommodate them to my proportions by a liberal use of pins, notwithstanding the difference of size. Thus equipped, with a buff military vest, and worsted gaiters with very square toes, I took my way to the Hall in company with Major Smith and his brother.

The appearance of the company, nevertheless, was genteel and respectable, and perhaps the genial, unrestrained social spirit that possessed all present would have been less had there been more uniformity of costume. Gen. Riley was there in full uniform,

with the yellow sash he won at Contreras ; Majors Canby, Hill and Smith, Captains Burton and Kane, and the other officers stationed in Monterey, accompanying him. In one group might be seen Capt. Sutter's soldierly moustache and clear blue eye ; in another, the erect figure and quiet, dignified bearing of Gen. Vallejo. Don Pablo de la Guerra, with his handsome, aristocratic features, was the floor manager, and gallantly discharged his office. Conspicuous among the native members were Don Miguel de Pedrorena and Jacinto Rodriguez, both polished gentlemen and deservedly popular. Dominguez, the Indian member, took no part in the dance, but evidently enjoyed the scene as much as any one present. The most interesting figure to me was that of Padre Ramirez, who, in his clerical cassock, looked on until a late hour. If the strongest advocate of priestly gravity and decorum had been present, he could not have found in his heart to grudge the good old padre the pleasure that beamed upon his honest countenance.

The band consisted of two violins and two guitars, whose music made up in spirit what it lacked in skill. They played, as it seemed to me, but three pieces alternately, for waltz, contra-dance and quadrille. The latter dance was evidently an unfamiliar one, for once or twice the music ceased in the middle of a figure. Each tune ended with a funny little squeak, something like the whistle of the octave flute in *Robert le Diable*. The players, however, worked incessantly, and deserved good wages for their performance. The etiquette of the dance was marked by that grave, stately courtesy, which has been handed down from the old Spanish times. The gentlemen invariably gave the ladies their hands to lead them to their places on the floor ; in the pauses of the dance both parties stood motionless side by side, and at its conclusion the lady was bravely led back to her seat.

At twelve o'clock supper was announced. The Court-Room in the lower story had been fitted up for this purpose, and, as it was not large enough to admit all the guests, the ladies were first conducted thither and waited upon by a select committee. The refreshments consisted of turkey, roast pig, beef, tongue and *pâtés* with wines and liquors of various sorts, and coffee. A large supply had been provided, but after everybody was served, there was not much remaining. The ladies began to leave about two o'clock, but when I came away, an hour later, the dance was still going on with spirit.

The members met this morning at the usual hour, to perform the last duty that remained to them—that of signing the Constitution. They were all in the happiest humor, and the morning was so bright and balmy that no one seemed disposed to call an organization. Mr. Semple was sick, and Mr. Steuart, of San Francisco, therefore called the meeting to order by moving Capt Sutter's appointment in his place. The Chair was taken by the old pioneer, and the members took their seats around the sides of the hall, which still retained the pine-trees and banners, left from last night's decorations. The windows and doors were open, and a delightful breeze came in from the Bay, whose blue waters sparkled in the distance. The view from the balcony in front was bright and inspiring. The town below—the shipping in the harbor—the pine-covered hills behind—were mellowed by the blue October haze, but there was no cloud in the sky, and I could plainly see, on the northern horizon, the mountains of Santa Cruz and the Sierra de Gavilan.

After the minutes had been read, the Committee appointed to draw up an Address to the People of California was called upon to report, and Mr. Steuart, Chairman, read the Address. Its tone

and sentiment met with universal approval, and it was adopted without a dissenting voice. A resolution was then offered to pay Lieut. Hamilton, who is now engaged in engrossing the Constitution upon parchment, the sum of \$500 for his labor. This magnificent prize, probably the highest ever paid for a similar service is on a par with all things else in California. As this was their last session, the members were not disposed to find fault with it, especially when it was stated by one of them that Lieut. Hamilton had written day and night to have it ready, and was still working upon it, though with a lame and swollen hand. The sheet for the signers' names was ready, and the Convention decided to adjourn for half an hour and then meet for the purpose of signing.

I amused myself during the interval by walking about the town. Everybody knew that the Convention was about closing, and it was generally understood that Capt. Burton had loaded the guns at the fort, and would fire a salute of thirty-one guns at the proper moment. The citizens, therefore, as well as the members, were in an excited mood. Monterey never before looked so bright, so happy, so full of pleasant expectation.

About one o'clock the Convention met again; few of the members, indeed, had left the hall. Mr. Semple, although in feeble health, called them to order, and, after having voted Gen. Riley a salary of \$10,000, and Mr. Halleck, Secretary of State, \$6,000 a year, from the commencement of their respective offices, they proceeded to affix their names to the completed Constitution. At this moment a signal was given; the American colors ran up the flag-staff in front of the Government buildings, and streamed out on the air. A second afterward the first gun boomed from the fort, and its stirring echoes came back from one hill after another till they were lost in the distance.

All the native enthusiasm of Capt Sutter's Swiss blood was aroused ; he was the old soldier again. He sprang from his seat, and, waving his hand around his head, as if swinging a sword, exclaimed : " Gentlemen, this is the happiest day of my life. It makes me glad to hear those cannon : they remind me of the time when I was a soldier. Yes, I am glad to hear them—this is a great day for California !" Then, recollecting himself, he sat down, the tears streaming from his eyes. The members with one accord, gave three tumultuous cheers, which were heard from one end of the town to the other. As the signing went on, gun followed gun from the fort, the echoes reverberating grandly around the bay, till finally, as the loud ring of the *thirty-first* was heard, there was a shout : " That's for California !" and every one joined in giving three times three for the new star added to our Confederation.

There was one handsome act I must not omit to mention. The Captain of the English bark Volunteer, of Sidney, Australia, lying in the harbor, sent on shore in the morning for an American flag. When the first gun was heard, a line of colors ran fluttering up to the spars, the stars and stripes flying triumphantly from the main-top. The compliment was the more marked, as some of the American vessels neglected to give any token of recognition to the event of the day.

The Constitution having been signed and the Convention dissolved, the members proceeded in a body to the house of Gen. Riley. The visit was evidently unexpected by the old veteran. When he made his appearance Captain Sutter stepped forward and having shaken him by the hand, drew himself into an erect attitude, raised one hand to his breast as if he were making a report to his commanding officer on the field of battle, and addressed him as follows :

GENERAL : I have been appointed by the Delegates, elected by the people of California to form a Constitution, to address you in their names and in behalf of the whole people of California, and express the thanks of the Convention for the aid and coöperation they have received from you in the discharge of the responsible duty of creating a State Government. And, sir, the Convention, as you will perceive from the official records, duly appreciates the great and important services you have rendered to our common country, and especially to the people of California, and entertains the confident belief that you will receive from the whole of the people of the United States, when you retire from your official duties here, that verdict so grateful to the heart of the patriot : ‘ Well done, thou good and faithful servant.’ ”

Gen. Riley was visibly affected by this mark of respect, no less appropriate than well deserved on his part. The tears in his eyes and the plain, blunt sincerity of his voice and manner, went to the heart of every one present. “ Gentlemen : ” he said, “ I never made a speech in my life. I am a soldier—but I can *feel* ; and I do feel deeply the honor you have this day conferred upon me. Gentlemen, this is a prouder day to me than that on which my soldiers cheered me on the field of Contreras. I thank you all from my heart. I am satisfied now that the people have done right in selecting Delegates to frame a Constitution. They have chosen a body of men upon whom our country may look with pride : you have framed a Constitution worthy of California. And I have no fear for California while her people choose their Representatives so wisely. Gentlemen, I congratulate you upon the successful conclusion of your arduous labors ; and I wish you all happiness and prosperity.”

The General was here interrupted with three hearty cheers

which the members gave him, as Governor of California, followed by three more, "as a gallant soldier, and worthy of his country's glory." He then concluded in the following words: "I have but one thing to add, gentlemen, and that is, that my success in the affairs of California is mainly owing to the efficient aid rendered me by Capt. Halleck, the Secretary of State. He has stood by me in all emergencies. To him I have always appealed when at a loss myself; and he has never failed me."

This recognition of Capt. Halleck's talents and the signal service he has rendered to our authorities here, since the conquest, was peculiarly just and appropriate. It was so felt by the members, and they responded with equal warmth of feeling by giving three enthusiastic cheers for the Secretary of State. They then took their leave, many of them being anxious to start this afternoon for their various places of residence. All were in a happy and satisfied mood, and none less so than the native members. Pedrorena declared that this was the most fortunate day in the history of California. Even Carillo, in the beginning one of our most zealous opponents, displayed a genuine zeal for the Constitution, which he helped to frame under the laws of our Republic.

Thus closes the Convention; and I cannot help saying, with Capt. Sutter, that the day which sees laid the broad and liberal foundation of a free and independent State on the shores of the Pacific, is a great day for California. As an American, I feel proud and happy—proud, that the Empire of the West, the commerce of the great Pacific, the new highway to the Indies, forming the last link in that belt of civilized enterprise which now clasps the world, has been established under my country's flag; and happy, that in all the extent of California, from the glittering snows of the Shaste to the burning deserts of the Colorado, no

slave shall ever lift his arm to make the freedom of that flag a mockery.

The members of the Convention may have made some blunders in the course of their deliberations; there may be some objectionable clauses in the Constitution they have framed. But where was there ever a body convened, under such peculiar circumstances?—where was ever such harmony evolved out of so wonderful, so dangerous, so magnificent a chaos? The elements of which the Convention was composed were no less various, and in some respects antagonistic, than those combined in the mining population. The questions they had to settle were often perplexing, from the remarkable position of the country and the absence of all precedent. Besides, many of them were men unused to legislation. Some had for years past known no other life than that of the camp; others had nearly forgotten all law in the wild life of the mountains; others again were familiar only with that practiced under the rule of a different race. Yet the courtesies of debate have never been wantonly violated, and the result of every conflict of opinion has been a quiet acquiescence on the part of the minority. Now, at the conclusion, the only feeling is that of general joy and congratulation.

Thus, we have another splendid example of the ease and security with which people can be educated to govern themselves. From that chaos whence, under the rule of a despotism like the Austrian, would spring the most frightful excesses of anarchy and crime, a population of freemen peacefully and quietly develops the highest form of civil order—the broadest extent of liberty and security. Governments, bad and corrupt as many of them are, and imperfect as they all must necessarily be, nevertheless at times exhibit scenes of true moral sublimity. What I

have to-day witnessed has so impressed me ; and were I a believer in omens, I would augur from the tranquil beauty of this evening—from the clear sky and the lovely sunset hues on the waters of the bay—more than all, from the joyous expression of every face I see— a glorious and prosperous career for the STATE OF CALIFORNIA !

CHAPTER XVII.

SHORE AND FOREST.

No one can be in Monterey a single night, without being startled and awed by the deep, solemn crashes of the surf as it breaks along the shore. There is no continuous roar of the plunging waves, as we hear on the Atlantic seaboard; the slow, regular swells—quiet pulsations of the great Pacific's heart—roll inward in unbroken lines and fall with single grand crashes, with intervals of dead silence between. They may be heard through the day, if one listens, like a solemn undertone to all the shallow noises of the town, but at midnight, when all else is still, those successive shocks fall upon the ear with a sensation of inexpressible solemnity. All the air, from the pine forests to the sea, is filled with a light tremor and the intermitting beats of sound are strong enough to jar a delicate ear. Their constant repetition at last produces a feeling something like terror. A spirit worn and weakened by some scathing sorrow could scarcely bear the reverberation.

When there has been a gale outside, and a morning of dazzling clearness succeeds a night of fog and cold wind, the swells are loudest and most magnificent. Then their lines of foam are flung upward like a snowy fringe along the dark-blue hem of the sea

and a light, glittering mist constantly rises from the hollow curve of the shore. One quiet Sunday afternoon, when the uproar was such as to be almost felt in the solid earth, I walked out along the sand till I had passed the anchorage and could look on the open Pacific. The surface of the bay was comparatively calm ; but within a few hundred yards of the shore it upheaved with a slow majestic movement, forming a single line more than a mile in length, which, as it advanced, presented a perpendicular front of clear green water, twelve feet in height. There was a gradual curving-in of this emerald wall—a moment's waver—and the whole mass fell forward with a thundering crash, hurling the shattered spray thirty feet into the air. A second rebound followed ; and the boiling, seething waters raced far up the sand with a sharp, trampling, metallic sound, like the jangling of a thousand bars of iron. I sat down on a pine log, above the highest wave-mark, and watched this sublime phenomenon for a long time. The sand-hills behind me confined and redoubled the sound, prolonging it from crash to crash, so that the ear was constantly filled with it. Once, a tremendous swell came in close on the heels of one that had just broken, and the two uniting, made one wave, which shot far beyond the water-line and buried me above the knee. As far as I could see, the shore was white with the subsiding deluge. It was a fine illustration of the magnificent language of Scripture : “ He maketh the deep to boil like a pot ; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment ; one would think the deep to be hoary.”

The pine forest behind the town encloses in its depths many spots of remarkable loneliness and beauty. The forest itself had a peculiar charm for me, and scarcely a day passed without my exploring some part of its solemn region. The old, rugged trees, blackened with many fires, are thickly bearded with long gray

moss, which gives out a hoarse, dull sound as the sea-wind sweeps through them. The promontory of Monterey is entirely covered with them, excepting only the little glens, or cañadas, which wind their way between the interlocking bases of the hills. Here, the grass is thick and luxuriant through the whole year; the pines shut out all sight but the mild, stainless heaven above their tops; the air is fragrant with the bay and laurel, and the light tread of a deer or whirr of a partridge, at intervals, alone breaks the delicious solitude. The far roar of the surf, stealing up through the avenues of the forest, is softened to a murmur by the time it reaches these secluded places. No more lovely hermitages for thought or the pluming of callow fancies, can be found among the pine-bowers of the Villa Borghese.

After climbing all of the lesser heights, and barking my hand on the rough bark of a branchless pine, in the endeavor to climb it for a look-out, I started one afternoon on an expedition to the top of a bald summit among the hills to the southward. It was apparently near at hand and easy of access, but after I had walked several miles, I saw, from the top of a ridge, that a deep valley—a chasm, almost—was to be passed before I could reach even its foot. The side seemed almost precipitous and the loose stones slid under my feet; but by hanging to the low limbs of trees, I succeeded in getting to the bottom. The bed of the valley, not more than a hundred yards in breadth, was one matted mass of wild vines, briars and thorny shrubs. I trusted to the strength of my corduroys for defence against them, and to a good horse-pisto. should I stumble on some wild beast's lair—and plunged in. At the first step I sank above my head, without touching the bottom. The briars were woven so closely that it was impossible to press through or creep under them; I could only flounder along, draw

ing myself up by the greatest exertions, to sink into another gulf a few inches in advance. My hands and clothes were torn, my mouth filled with dry and bitter pollen from the withered vines that brushed my face, and it was only after an hour's labor that I reached the other side, completely exhausted.

I climbed the opposite hill, thinking my object nearly attained, when lo ! another, a deeper and rougher chasm still intervened. The sun was already down and I gave up the journey. From the end of the ridge I had attained, I overlooked all the circumference of the bay. Behind the white glimmer of the town the forest rose with a gradual sweep, while before me lay a wide extent of undulating hills, rolling off to the Salinas Plains, which appeared beyond—

“ Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-colored even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon.”

Taking another road, I wandered home in the dusk, not without some chance of losing myself among the frequent hollows and patches of chapparal. I lay in wait half an hour for two deer, a glimpse of whom I had caught in the woods, but as I had not the keen sight of a Kentucky hunter, I was obliged to go home without them.

The opposite shore of the promontory contains many striking and picturesque points, to which the Montereyans often resort on parties of pleasure. One of the most remarkable of these is *Punta de los Cipreses*, or Cypress Point, which I visited several times. One of my most memorable days, while at Monterey, was spent there in company with my friend, Ross Browne. We started early in the morning, carrying with us a loaf of bread and a piece

of raw beef, as materials for dinner. After threading the mazes of the forest for several miles, we came upon the bleak sand-hills piled like snow-drifts between the forest and the beach. The bare tongue of land which jutted out beyond them was covered with a carpet of maritime plants, among which I noticed one with a beautiful star-like flower : another, with succulent, wax-like leaves, bears a fruit which is greatly relished by the Californians.

The extremity of the Point is a mass of gray rock, worn by the surf into fantastic walls and turrets. The heavy swells of the open sea, striking their bases with tremendous force, fill their crevices with foaming spray, which pours off in a hundred cataracts as the wave draws back for another shock. In the narrow channels between the rocks, the pent waters roll inland with great force, flooding point after point and flinging high into the air the purple flags and streamers of sea-weed, till they reach the glassy, sheltered pools, that are quietly filled and emptied with every pulsation of the great sea without. A cold mist hung over the sea, which heightened the wildness and bleakness of the scene and made it inspiring. Flocks of sea-gulls uttered their shrill, piping cry as they flew over us, and a seal now and then thrust up his inquisitive head, outside of the surf.

We collected the drift-wood which lay scattered along the shore, and made a roaring fire on the rocks. After having sliced and spitted our meat and set our bread to toast, we crept into the crevices that opened to the sea, and at the momentary risk of being drenched, tore off the muscles adhering to them. When well roasted, their flesh is tender and nearly as palatable as that of an oyster ; it is of a bright orange color, with a little black beard at one end, which is intensely bitter and must be rejected. We seasoned our meat by dipping it into the sea, and when our

meal was ready, ate it from the pearly shells of the *avelone*, which strewn the sand. It was a rare dinner, that, with its grand accompaniment of surf-music and the clanging sea-gulls as our attendants. On our way home we came suddenly on a pack of seven black wolves, who had been feeding on the body of a large stranded fish. They gave a howl of surprise and started off at full speed, through the bushes, where I attempted to follow them, but my legs were no match for their fleetness.

I rode to Point Pinos one afternoon, in company with Major Hill. Our way was through the Pine Forest; we followed no regular path, but pushed our horses through chapparal, leaped them over trees that had been uprooted in the last winter's storms, and spurred them at a gallop through the cleared intervals. A narrow ridge of sand intervenes between the pines and the sea. Beyond it, the Point—a rugged mass of gray sandstone rock, washed into fantastic shapes, juts out into the Pacific. The tide was at its ebb, but a strong wind was blowing, and the shock and foam of the swells was magnificent. We scrambled from ledge to ledge till we gained the extremity of the Point, and there, behind the last rock that fronts the open sea, found a little sheltered cove, whose sides and bottom were covered with star-fish, *avelones*, muscles, and polypi of brilliant colors. There were prickly balls of purple, rayed fish of orange and scarlet, broad flower-like animals of green and umber hue, and myriads of little crabs and snails, all shining through the clear green water. The *avelone*, which is a univalve, found clinging to the sides of rocks, furnishes the finest mother-of-pearl. We had come provided with a small iron bar, which was more than a match for their suction power, and in a short space of time secured a number of their beautiful shells. Among the sand-hills and even in some part

of the forest, the earth is strewn with them. The natives were formerly in the habit of gathering them into large heaps and making lime therefrom.

The existence of these shells in the soil is but one of the facts which tend to prove the recent geological formation of this part of the coast. There is every reason to believe that a great part of the promontory on which Monterey is built, was at no very remote period of time covered by the sea. A sluggish salt lagoon, east of the Catholic Church, was not more than twenty years ago a part of the bay, from which it is now separated by a sandy meadow, quarter of a mile in breadth. According to an Indian tradition, of comparatively modern origin, the waters of San Francisco Bay once communicated with the bay of Monterey by the valley of San José and the Rio del Pajaro. I should think a level of fifty feet, or perhaps less—above the present one, would suffice to have effected this. The other Indian tradition, that the outlet of the Golden Gate was occasioned by violent disruption of the hills, through the means of an earthquake, is not based on natural evidence. The sloughs and marshes in the valley of San Joaquin, and around the Tularé Lakes, present every appearance of having been left by the drainage of a subsiding ocean. A thorough geological exploration of California would undoubtedly bring to light many strange and interesting facts connected with her physical formation.

On our way home, we discovered a sea-otter, basking on a isolated rock. Major Hill crept stealthily to within about fifty yards of him, took good aim and fired. He gave a convulsive leap and tumbled into the sea, evidently badly wounded, if not killed. His body floated out on the waves, and a flock of sea-mews, attracted by the blood, flew round him, uttering their piping cry

and darting down to the water. The otter is rare on this part of the coast, and the skin of one is valued at \$40.

I shall notice but one other ramble about the forests and shores of Monterey. This was a visit to the ex-Mission of Carmel and Point Lobos, which I made in company with Mr. Lyon, one of the Secretaries of the Convention. A well-traveled road, leading over the hills, conducted us to the Mission, which is situated on the Pacific side of the promontory, at the head of a shallow bay. The beautiful but deserted valley in which it stands is threaded by the Rio de Carmel, whose waters once gave unfailing fertility to its now neglected gardens. The Mission building is in the form of a hollow square, with a spacious court-yard, overlooked by a heavy belfry and chapel-dome of sun-dried bricks. The out-buildings of the Indian retainers and the corrals of earth that once herded thousands of cattle are broken down and tenantless. We climbed into the tower and struck the fine old Spanish bells, but the sound called no faces into the blank windows.

We bribed a red-headed boy, who was playing with two or three younger children in the court-yard, to bring us the keys of the church. His father—an American who had been many years in the country and taken unto himself a native wife—followed, and opened for us the weather-beaten doors. The interior of the Church was lofty, the ceiling a rude attempt at a Gothic arch, and the shrine a huge, faded mass of gilding and paint, with some monkish portraits of saints. A sort of side-chapel near the entrance was painted with Latin mottos and arabesque scrolls which exhibited a genuine though uncultivated taste for adornment. The walls were hung with portraits of saints, some black and some white, some holding croziers, some playing violins and some baptizing Indians. Near the altar is the tomb of Padre Juniperc

Berra, the founder of Monterey and the zealous pioneer in the settlement and civilization of California.

We reached Point Lobos, which is three miles beyond the Mission, by a ride along the beach. It is a narrow, bluff headland, overgrown with pines nearly to its extremity. The path brought us to the brink of a stony declivity, shelving down to the sea. Off the Point, and at the distance of not more than two hundred yards, is a cluster of low rocks, some of which are covered with a deposit of guano. As we reined up on the edge of the bluff, a most extraordinary sound met our ears—a mingled bellowing, groaning and snorting, unlike anything I had ever heard. The rocks seemed to be in motion at the first glance, and one might readily have imagined that the sound proceeded from their uneasy heaving on the waves. But, on looking more closely, I saw that their visible surface was entirely covered with the huge bodies of the seals and sea-lions who had congregated there—great, unwieldy, wallowing creatures, from eight to fifteen feet in length, rolling to and fro among each other and uttering their peculiar bellowing cry. Occasionally, a group of them would slip off into the water, and attracted by their curiosity, approach the shore. The sea-lions, with their broad heads, rough manes and square fronts, showed some resemblance to the royal beast, when viewed in front. They are frequently captured and killed by whalers for the sake of their blubber, which yields a considerable quantity of oil.

I attended the Catholic Church in Monterey one Sunday, to hear good old Padre Ramirez. The church is small and with scanty decorations; the nave and gallery were both crowded by the Californian families and Indians. Near the door hung opposite pictures of Heaven and Hell—the former a sort of pyramid

inhabited by straight white figures, with an aspect of solemn distress; the latter enclosed in the expanded jaws of a dragon, swarming with devils who tormented their victims with spears and pitchforks. The church music was furnished by a diminutive parlor-organ, and consisted of a choice list of polkas, waltzes and fandango airs. Padre Ramirez preached a very excellent sermon recommending his Catholic flock to follow the example of the Protestants, who, he said, were more truly pious than they, and did much more for the welfare of their church. I noticed that during the sermon, several of the Californians disappeared through a small door at the end of the gallery. Following them, out of curiosity, I found them all seated in the belfry and along the coping of the front, composedly smoking their cigars.

There was a little gold excitement in Monterey during my visit, on account of the report that a washing of considerable richness had been discovered near the Mission of San Antonio, among the Coast Mountains, sixty miles to the southward. According to the accounts which reached us, a number of people had commenced working there, with fair success, and traders were beginning to send their teams in that direction. Gold was also said to exist in small quantities near the Mission of Carmel, where, indeed, there were strong geological indications of it. These discoveries, however, were too slight to affect the repose of the town, which a much greater excitement could scarcely have shaken

CHAPTER XVIII.

OLD CALIFORNIA—ITS MISSIONS AND ITS LANDS.

THREE or four weeks of my stay in Monterey were principally passed in the office of the Civil Government, where I was employed in examining all the records relating to land titles and Mission property in California. Notwithstanding the apparent dryness of the subject, I found the documents curious and interesting. The smoky *papel sellado* on which they were written—the naïve and irregular orthography—the rude drawings and maps which accompanied them and the singular laws and customs of which they gave evidence, had a real charm to any one possessing the slightest relish for the odor of antiquity. Most interesting of all was a box of records, brought from La Paz, Lower California, where many similar boxes, equally precious, were used for the wadding of Castro's cannon. Among its contents were letters of instruction from the Viceroy Galvez, original letters of Padre Junipero Serra and mandates from the Bishops of Mexico to the Missionaries in Sonora and California. I was never tired of hearing Capt. Halleck, the Secretary of State, whose knowledge of the early history of California is not equalled by any one in the country, talk of those marvellous times and make clear the misty meaning of the rare old papers.

The extensive history of Vanegas, an abridgment of which has been introduced by Mr. Forbes into his work on California, is the most complete of all which have been written. It is mainly confined, however, to the settlement of the Peninsula, and throws no light on the after decay and ruin of the Missions of Alta California. These establishments, to which solely are owing the settlement and civilization of the country, have now entirely fallen from their former supremacy, and are of no further importance in a civil view. Some facts concerning the manner of their downfall, which I learned during my labors among the archives, may be not inappropriately given here. Henceforth, under the ascendancy of American institutions, they have no longer an existence: shall we not, therefore, now that their day is over, take one backward glance over the places they have filled and the good or evil they have accomplished?

The history of their original foundation is one of remarkable interest. Through the perseverance and self-denying labors of a few Catholic Priests alone, the natives, not only of the Peninsula and the Coast, as far north as San Francisco Bay, but the extensive provinces of Sonora and Sinaloa, were taught the arts of civilized life and subjected to the dominion of Spain. The lives of Padres Kino, Salvatierra and Ugarte exhibit instances of danger, adventure and heroic endurance scarcely inferior to those of Cortez and Coronado. The great work they accomplished on the Peninsula and in the Northern Provinces of Mexico, in the beginning of the last century, was followed fifty years later by Padre Junipero Serra, who in 1769 founded the Mission of San Diego, the first settlement in Alta California. In the succeeding year he landed at Monterey, and by a solemn mass which was performed under an oak-tree still standing near the fort, took possea-

sion of the spot After laboring for thirteen years with indefatigable zeal and activity, during which time he founded nine missions, the good Padre died in 1784, and was buried in the grave-yard of Carmel. His successors continued the work, and by the year 1800 had increased the number of Missions to sixteen. Since that time only three more have been added. The Missions are named and located as follows : San Rafael and San Francisco Solano, north of San Francisco Bay ; Dolores, near San Francisco, Santa Clara and San José, near Pueblo San José ; San Juan, Santa Cruz and Carmel, near Monterey ; Soledad, San Antonio and San Miguel, in the Valley of Salinas River ; San Luis Obispo ; La Purisima, Santa Ynez, Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura, near Santa Barbara ; San Gabriel and San Fernando, near Los Angeles ; and San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano and San Diego, on the coast, south of Los Angeles.

The wealth and power in the possession of these Missions naturally excited the jealousy of Government, after California was organized into a territory. The padres, however, had been granted almost unlimited privileges by the earlier Viceroy, and for a long time no authority could be found to dispossess them. A decree of the Spanish Cortes, in 1813, relating to the Missions of South America, was made the basis of repeated attempts to overthrow the temporal power of the padres, but without effect, and from 1800 to 1830, they revelled securely in the full enjoyment of their wealthy establishments.

That, indeed, was *their* age of gold—a right bounteous and prosperous time, toward which many of the Californian and even of the old American residents, look back with regret. Then, each Mission was a little principality, with its hundred thousand acres, and its twenty thousand head of cattle. All the Indian population

except the "Gentiles" of the mountains, were the subjects of the padres, cultivating for them their broad lands and reverencing them with the same devout faith as they did the patron saint of the settlement. The spacious galleries, halls and courtyards of the Missions exhibited every sign of order and good government, and from the long rows of adobe houses flanking them an obedient crowd came forth, at the sound of morning and evening chimes. The tables of the padres were laden with the finest fruits and vegetables from their thrifty gardens and orchards, and flasks of excellent wine from their own vineyards. The stranger who came that way was entertained with a lavish hospitality for which all recompense was proudly refused, and on leaving, was welcome to exchange his spent horse for his pick out of the caballada. Nearly all the commerce of the country with other nations was in their hands. Long habits of management and economy gave them a great aptitude for business of all kinds, and each succeeding year witnessed an increase of their wealth and authority.

The first blow given to their privileges, was a decree of the Supreme Government of Mexico, dated August 17, 1833, by which the Missions of Upper and Lower California were secularized and became public property. They were converted by law into parishes, and the padres, from being virtual sovereigns of their domains, became merely curates, possessing only spiritual powers over their former subjects. Instead of managing the revenue of the estates, they were paid from \$2,000 to \$2,500, at the option of Government. The church was still kept for religious purposes, and the principal building for the curate's house, while other portions of the establishment were appropriated to the purposes of court-houses and schools.

This law of course emancipated the Indians from the authority

of the padres, and likewise absolved the latter from their obligations to maintain them. To provide for their support, therefore, the Government granted to every head of a family a lot from one to four hundred varas square, which was assigned to the use of themselves and their descendants, but could not be sold by them under penalty of the land reverting back to the public domain. The temporal affairs of each Mission were placed under the charge of an Ayuntamiento, who was commissioned to explain to the Indians the new relations, and put them in possession of the land. A portion of the revenue was applied to their benefit, and in return therefor they were obliged to assist in cultivating the common lands of the new pueblos or parishes. By a further decree, in 1840, Governor Alvarado substituted majordomos in place of the ayuntamientos, giving them power to manage the temporal affairs of the Missions, but not to dispose of the revenues or contract debts without the permission of Government.

These decrees put a stop to the prosperity of the Missions. The Padres, seeing the establishments taken out of their hands, employed themselves no longer in superintending their cultivation; while the Indians, though free, lost the patient guidance and encouragement they had received, and relapsed into their hereditary habits of sloth and stupidity. Many of them scattered from their homes, resuming a roving life among the mountains, and very soon several of the Missions almost ceased to have an existence. Gov. Michelorena, therefore, in 1843, in a pompous proclamation setting forth his loyalty to the Catholic Faith, attempted to restore the former state of things by delivering twelve of the Missions into the hands of the priests. He declared, at the same time, that all the cattle and property should be given up to them, but that those portions of the Mission estates which had been granted to individuals should

still remain in possession of the latter. The proclamation, so far as I can learn, never went into effect, and the chasing of Michel torena from the country soon put an end to his plans

In the year 1845 Governor Pio Pico completed the obliteration of the Missions. By a Government decree he directed that the Missions of San Juan, Carmel, San Francisco Solano and San Juan Capistrano should be sold at auction on a specified day. One month's notice was given to the Indian neophytes of the Missions of San Rafael, Dolores, Soledad, San Miguel and La Purisima to return to the cultivation and occupancy of the lands assigned them by Government, otherwise the same should be declared unoccupied and disposed of like the preceding. All the remaining Missions, except the Episcopal Mansion at Santa Barbara, were to be rented. Of the proceeds of these sales and leases one-third was to be used for the support of the resident priests, one-third for the benefit of the Indians, and the remaining third constituting the Pious Fund of California to be applied to purposes of education and beneficence.

The Indian neophytes of the five last-named Missions having neglected to assemble, Pico, by a decree in October, 1845, ordered that they should be sold to the highest bidder; and at the same time, that those of San Fernando, Buenaventura, Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez, should be rented for the term of nine years. This was the last valid decree touching the Missions. The remaining Missions of Santa Clara, San José, Santa Cruz, San Antonio, San Luis Obispo, San Gabriel and San Diego were therefore thrown immediately into the hands of the United States after possession had been taken by our troops; and all Mission property not legally granted or sold under the laws of California becomes part of the public domain.

I endeavored to obtain some statistics of the land, cattle and other property belonging to the various Missions. The data on record, however, partake of the same indefinite character as the description of lands for which grants are asked. I found, it is true, an account of the boundaries of most of the Missions, with the quality of the land embraced by them, but the particulars, notwithstanding they were given by the resident padres themselves, are very unsatisfactory. The lands are described as lying between certain hills and rivers, or embracing certain plains; sometimes they are spoken of as *cañadas* or *llanos* only. Some are of great extent; the Mission lands of San Antonio contain two hundred and twenty-five square leagues and those of San Miguel five hundred and thirty-two. The others vary from twenty to one hundred square leagues. At a rough guess, I should compute the original Mission lands at about eight millions of acres; probably four to five millions of acres have since been disposed of by sales and grants. The remaining three millions of acres, comprising the finest lands in California, are the property of the United States. As much of it has been cultivated, or is capable of immediate adaptation for the planting of orchards, gardens and vineyards, the sale or disposal of it would seem to require different regulations from those which govern other portions of the public domain.

The Mission buildings now are but wrecks of their former condition. The broken walls, deserted corrals, and roofless dwellings which surround them, are but melancholy evidences of their ancient prosperity. Their character for wealth and hospitality has passed away with the rule of the padres and the vassalage of the Indians. They have had their day. They have fulfilled (and nobly, too, be it acknowledged) the purpose of their creation. I see no cause for lamenting, as many do, over their downfall. The

spirit of enterprise which has now taken firm root in the soil, will make their neglected gardens blossom again, and deck their waste fields with abundant harvests.

A subject of more direct interest to the California emigrants, is that of the character and validity of the grants made to settlers previous to the acquisition of the country. The extravagant pitch to which land speculation has risen, and the uncertain tenure by which many of the best locations along the coast are held, render some official examination and adjustment very necessary. The amount of speculation which has already been done on an insecure basis, will give rise to endless litigation, when the proper tribunal shall have been established. Meanwhile, a brief account of the character of the grants, derived partly from Capt. Halleek's admirable Report on California Affairs and partly from an examination of the grants themselves, may not be without its interest and uses.

The first general decree for the granting of lands bears date of June, 1779, when Governor Neve, then established at Monterey, drew up a series of regulations, which were approved by the King of Spain, and for more than forty years remained in force, with little modification, throughout the territory. To each *poblador* (settler) was granted a bounty of \$116 44 per annum for the first two years, and \$60 per annum for the three following, with the loan of horses, cattle and farming utensils from the Government supplies. Settlers in pueblos, or towns, had likewise the privilege of pasturing their stock on the lands belonging to the town. Many of the minor regulations established in this decree of Gov. Neve, are sufficiently amusing. For instance, no poblador is allowed to sell any of his animals, until he shall possess fifteen mares and one stallion, fifteen cows and one bull, and so on, down to cocks and

hens. He must then sell his next stock to the Government, which of course pays its own price.

These regulations, designed only for the first rude stage of colonization, were superseded by the decree of the Mexican Republic for the colonization of its Territories, dated Aug. 18, 1824, which was further limited and defined by a series of regulations, dated Nov. 21, 1828. Up to the time when California passed into the hands of the United States, no modifications were made to these acts, and they consequently remain in force. Their most important provisions are as follows:

The Governor of the Territory is empowered to make grants of lands to contractors (for towns or colonies) and individuals or heads of families. Grants of the first-named class require the approval of the Supreme Government to make them valid. For the latter the ratification of the Territorial Assembly is necessary; but in no case can the Governor make grants of any land lying within ten leagues of the sea-coast or within twenty leagues of the boundaries of any foreign power, without the previous approval of the Supreme Government. The authorities of towns, however, are allowed to dispose of lands lying within the town limits, the proceeds to be paid into the municipal fund. The maximum extent of a single grant is fixed at one square league of irrigable land, four of *temporal*, or land where produce depends on the seasons, and six of land for pasturing and rearing cattle—eleven square leagues (about fifty thousand acres) in all. The minimum extent is two hundred varas square (a vara is a little less than a yard) of irrigable land, eight hundred of temporal, and twelve hundred of pasturage. The size of a house lot in any of the pueblos is fixed at one hundred varas. The irregular spaces and patches lying between the boundaries of grants throughout

the country are to be distributed among the colonists who occupy the adjoining land, or their children, preference being given to those who have distinguished themselves by their industry and moral deportment.

All grants not made in accordance with these regulations, from the time of their adoption up to July 7, 1846, when the American flag was raised at Monterey and the Departmental Junta broken up, are not strictly valid, according to Mexican law. The restrictions against lands within ten leagues of the sea-coast were never removed. The only legal grant of such land, was that made to Captain Stephen Smith, of the port of Bodega, which received the approval of the Supreme Government. In the Macnamara Colonization Grant, made by Pio Pico, only four days before the occupation of Monterey by our forces, it is expressly stated that the consent of the Mexican Government is necessary to make it valid. Yet, in spite of this distinct provision, large tracts of this coast, from San Francisco to San Diego, were granted to citizens and colonists by Figueroa, Alvarado and other Governors. All these acts, having never received the sanction of the Supreme Government, would, by a literal construction of the law be null and void. The Supreme Government of Mexico always reserved to itself the right of using any portion of the coast, promontories, harbors or public land of the interior, for the purpose of erecting forts, arsenals or national storehouses.

There are on file in the archives about five hundred and eighty grants, made by various Governors between 1828 and 1846. Probably one hundred of these lack the full requirements of the Mexican law—exclusive of those located on the sea-coast. Some are complete and satisfactory in all respects, to the signature of the Governor, but the concurrence of the Territorial Assembly

is wanting. In others the final concession is withheld for the purpose of procuring further information. Others again, appear to have been neglected by the proper authorities, and a few, on further testimony, have been denied. As the owners of such lands, in many instances, are entirely unaware of the imperfect nature of their titles, many sales and transfers have been made in good faith, which will hereafter be invalidated. Some individuals have acted in a more reprehensible manner, by making sales of lands to which they had no legal claim.

In settling the boundaries of grants, which are sound in every respect, there will nevertheless be some difficulty. Much of the land was never surveyed, the locality and character being rudely sketched on paper by the petitioner, sometimes without any specified extent, and sometimes with a guess at the quantity, which is often very wide of the mark. Such sketch, or topographical outline is, I believe, required by law, and the collection embraced in the number of grants and applications on file, exhibits a most curious variety of attempts at drawing. In the absence of any further clue, it would be difficult to find many of the localities or anything in the least resembling them. The boundaries are frequently given as included within certain hills, arroyos, rivers and marshes, but the space so designated frequently contains double the amount of land asked for.

On the lands throughout the country, known and recognized as belonging to the United States, a number of emigrants have established themselves, making choice of advantageous locations, and trusting to obtain possession by right of preëminence as settlers. Nearly all of the fords on the Sacramento and San Joaquin and their tributaries—the springs and meadow lands at the bases of the mountains—and all sites which seem calculated

for future towns or villages—have been appropriated in like manner. The discovery of gold has rendered any bounty unnecessary, to promote emigration.

I endeavored to ascertain the exact extent of granted land in California, as well as the amount which will remain to the United States; but owing to the indefinite character of many of the grants, and the absence of correct statistical information, was unable fully to succeed. The geographical limits within which the grants are embraced, are more easily traced. By referring to Frémont's Map of California, a line drawn from the mouth of Russian River, on the Pacific, north of Bodega, to the mouth of Rio Chico, a tributary of the Sacramento, and continued to the Sierra Nevada, would comprise the northern limit. From this line to the Oregon boundary—a region two hundred and fifty miles in length by two hundred in breadth—belongs to the public domain. The land about the mouths of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, with some tracts on the Rio Americano, Cosumne, Calaveras and Mariposa, is included in various grants, but the remainder of the settled land as you go southward, is upon the western side of the Coast Range, and all of it within ninety miles of the sea. The best agricultural districts—those of Napa, San José and Los Angeles—are already settled and cultivated, but the upper portion of the Sacramento country, the valleys of Trinity River and Russian River, and the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada, embrace a great deal of arable land of excellent quality. The valleys of the Coast Range north of San Francisco Bay have been but partially explored.

The entire gold district of the Sierra Nevada belongs to the United States, with the exception of Johnson's Rancho on Bear Creek, Sutter's possessions on the Rio Americano, a grant on the

Cosumne, and Alvarado's Rancho on the Mariposa, now in possession of Col. Frémont. Some anxiety is felt among the mining population, as to the disposition which the Government will make of these vast storehouses of wealth. The day before the adjournment of the Convention, a resolution was offered, requesting Congress not to dispose of any part of the gold region, but to suffer it to remain free to all American citizens. It was defeated by a bare majority, but many of those voting nay, avowed themselves in favor of the spirit of the resolution, objecting to its adoption on the ground of propriety alone. The population, generally, is opposed to the sale of gold land for the reason that it would probably fall into the hands of speculators, to the disadvantage of the mining class. The lease of land would present the same objections, besides being but an uncertain privilege. The fairest and most satisfactory course would be the imposition of a small percentage on the amount of gold actually dug or washed out by each individual or company. The miners would not object to this; they only oppose any regulation which would give speculators a chance to elbow them out of their 'bars' and 'pockets.'

CHAPTER XIX.

RETURN TO SAN FRANCISCO

AFTER the adjournment of the Convention, Monterey relapsed into its former quiet, and I soon began to feel the old impatience and longing for motion and change. The season was waning, and barely time enough remained for the accomplishment of my design of a journey to the head of the Sacramento Valley. My friend, Lieut. Beale, with whom I had beguiled many an hour in tracing out plans for overland journeys and explorations, which should combine a spice of bold adventure with the acquisition of permanently useful knowledge, had left a week previous, in company with Col. Frémont and his family. A heavy fog had for several days lain like a bar across the mouth of the bay, and we feared that the anxiously-awaited steamer from Panama would pass without touching. This was a question of interest, as there had been no mail from the Atlantic States for more than two months, and the general impatience on that account was painful to witness. Under these circumstances, I grew tired of looking on the fresh, sparkling, intense blue of the bay and the dewy-violet shadows of the mountains beyond it, and so one fine morning thrust my few moveables into my knapsack and rolled up my sarape for a start.

I had a better reliance than my own feet, in making the journey. Mr. Semple, ex-President of the Convention, with his son and two of the ex-Clerks, were about leaving, and I was offered the means of conveyance as far as Pueblo San José. Mr. Semple was barely recovering from a severe attack of typhoid fever, and was obliged to be conveyed in an army ambulance, which was furnished by Capt. Kane, of the Quartermaster's Department. We started at noon, under a hot, bright sun, though the entrance to the bay was still covered by the bar of dark fog. The steamer Unicorn was anxiously expected, and as a gun had been heard during the night, Gen. Riley ordered a shot to be fired from the fort every half-hour, as a guide for the steamer, should she be outside. Had there been any certainty of her arrival, our haste to receive the long-delayed mail would have induced us to postpone the journey.

We toiled through the desolate sand-hills to the Salinas River, and lunched again upon its broad, level plains. Our team consisted of four Californian horses, neither of which had ever been a week in harness, and consequently were not broken of the dashing gait to which they had been accustomed. The driver was an emigrant who arrived two months previous, by the Gila route, after suffering the most terrible privations. We had all our provisions, blankets and camping utensils stowed in the ambulance, and as it was not large enough to contain our bodies likewise, two of the party followed in a light wagon. Under the steady gallop at which our fiery horses drew us, the blue ridges of the Sierra de Gavilan soon rose high and bleak before us, and the timbered shores of the plain came in sight. Our crossing of the arroyos would have startled even an Alleghany stage-driver. When one of these huge gullies yawned before us, there was no check of our

speed. We dashed sheer off the brink at an angle of fifty degrees; there was a giddy sensation of falling for an instant, and in the next our heavy vehicle regained the level, carried half-way up the opposite steep by the momentum of our descent. The excitement of such a plunge was delightful: the leaping of a five-arred gate on an English hunter would have been tame to it.

On the skirt of the timber Mr. Semple pointed out the scene of a battle between the Californian and American troops, during the war. Foster, a scout belonging to the company of Emigrant Volunteers, while reconnoitering along the bases of the mountains, discovered a body of two hundred Californians on the plain. He immediately sent word to Burrows' company of Americans, then at the Mission San Juan, and in the meantime attacked them with the small force accompanying him. The fight was carried on among the trees. When the Americans—sixty-six in all—arrived on the field, they found Foster dead, with eleven wounds on his body. Four Americans and seven Californians were shot in the fight, which resulted in the defeat of the latter and their retreat up the plains to their post at the Mission of Soledad. Foster was buried where he fell, under a large oak, near the road.

We entered the mountains, and encamped about dusk in a sheltered glen, watered by a little stream. Some benevolent predecessor had left us a good stock of wood, and in a short time the ruddy lights of our fire were dancing over the gnarled oak-boughs, and their streamers of grey moss. I tried my hand, for the first time, at making coffee, while the others spitted pieces of meat on long twigs and thrust them into the blaze. My coffee was approved by the company, and the seasoning of the keen mountain air was not lost on our meal. The pipe of peace—never omitted by the genuine trapper or mountaineer—followed; after which we spread

our blankets on the ground and looked at the stars through the chinks of the boughs, till we dropped asleep. There is no rest so sweet as that taken on the hard bosom of Mother Earth. I slept soundly in our spacious bed-chamber, undisturbed even by the continued barking whine of the coyotes. The cool, sparkling dawn called us up betimes, to rekindle the fire and resume cooking. When the sun made his appearance above the hills, our driver said: "There comes old Hannah, to open the shutters of our house and let in the light"—the most ludicrous combination of scullionish and poetical ideas it was ever my lot to hear. I must acknowledge, however, that "Old Hannah" did her office well, giving our nouse the most cheery illumination.

As we wound through the lonely passes of the mountains, Mr. Semple pointed out many spots where he had hidden on his night-rides as messenger between San Francisco and Monterey during the war. From some of the heights we looked down valleys that stretched away towards Santa Cruz, and could discern the dark lines of redwood timber along their border. The forest near the Mission contains the largest specimens of this tree to be found in California, some of the trunks, as I was credibly informed, measuring fifteen feet in diameter. Captain Graham, an old settler, had five saw-mills in operation, which he leased to speculators at the rate of fifty dollars per day for each. The timber is soft and easily worked, susceptible of a fine polish, and when kept dry, as in the interior of buildings, will last for centuries.

Midway down one of the long descents, we met Messrs. Marcy and Tefft, who had been to San Francisco to attend to the printing of the Constitution, bundles of which, in English and Spanish, were strapped to their saddles. Our next incident was the discovery of three grizzly bears, on the side of a cañada, about a

quarter of a mile distant. Mr. Semple, who, with the keen sight of one accustomed to mountain life, was on the alert for game, first espied them. They were moving lazily among a cluster of oaks; their bodies were, apparently, as large as that of a mule, but an experienced eye could at once detect the greater thickness and shortness of their legs. We had no other arms than pistols and knives, and no horses of sufficient fleetness to have ventured an attack with safety; so we passed on with many a wistful and lingering look, for the gray hide of one of those huge beasts would have been a trophy well worth the capture. Indeed, the oldest hunter, when he meets a grizzly bear, prefers making a boy's bargain—"If you'll let me alone, I'll let you alone." They are rarely known to attack a man when unprovoked, but when wounded no Indian tiger is more formidable.

Towards noon we reached the Mission San Juan. The bands of emigrants from the South had stripped all the fruit-trees in its gardens, but at a *tienda* in the Mission building, we were supplied with pears at the rate of three for a real—plump, luscious fruit, with russet peel, and so mellow that they would scarcely bear handling. While we were idling an hour in the warm corridor, trying to maintain a conversation in Spanish with some of the natives, a brother of Mr. Semple, who had come from Benicia to meet him, rode up to the inn. He had a gray horse, whose trot was remarkably rough, and at his request I changed places, giving up to him my seat in the ambulance. We dashed out on the plain of San Juan at a full gallop, but my perverse animal soon lagged behind. He was what is called a "Snake horse," of the breed owned by the Snake Indians in Oregon, whence, in fact, he had been brought, still retaining the steady, deliberate pace at which he had been accustomed to haul lodge-poles. His trot was rack

ing, and as a final resort to procure a gallop, I borrowed a pair of very sharp spurs from our driver. At the first touch the old Snake started; at the second he laid his ears flatly back, gave a snort and sprang forward with galvanic energy, taking me far in advance of the flying ambulance. It was so long since he had traveled such a pace that he seemed as much astonished as I was at the effect of my spurs.

The ambulance at last reached the Pajaro River, which flowed between deep and precipitous banks. The four horses plunged down the declivity; the ambulance followed with a terrible shock which urged it into the middle of the stream, where it stuck, the king-bolt having been snapped off. We partly stripped, and after working an hour with the ice-cold water above our knees, succeeded in fastening with chains the fragment of the bolt. It was now dinner-time, and we soon had a blaze among the willows and a pot of coffee boiling before it. The beverage, which never tasted more refreshing, sent a fine glow into our benumbed nether limbs, and put us into traveling humor again. The Pajaro Plains, around the head of the river, are finely watered, and under proper cultivation would produce splendid crops. From the ridge descending to the valley of San José we overlooked their broad expanse. The meadows were still green, and the belts of stately sycamore had not yet shed a leaf. I hailed the beautiful valley with pleasure, although its soil was more parched and arid than when I passed before, and the wild oats on the mountains rolled no longer in waves of gold. Their sides were brown and naked to desolation; the dead umber color of the landscape, towards sunset, was more cheerless than a mid-November storm. A traveler seeing California only at this season, would never be tempted to settle.

As we journeyed down the valley, flocks of wild geese and

brant, cleaving the air with their arrow-shaped lines, descended to their roost in the meadows. On their favorite grounds, near the head of Pajaro River, they congregated to the number of millions, hundreds of acres being in many places actually hidden under their dense ranks. They form in columns as they alight, and their stations at roost are as regularly arranged as in any military camp. As the season advances and their number is increased by new arrivals, they become so regardless of human presence that the rancheros kill large quantities with clubs. The native children have a curious method of entrapping them while on the wing. They tie two bones at the ends of a string about a yard in length, which they hurl into the air so skilfully that in falling it forms an arch. As the geese fly low, this instrument, dropping into a flock, generally takes one of them across the neck; the bones fall on each side and drag the goose to the earth, where he is at once seized and dispatched.

We passed Murphy's Rancho and the splendid peak of El Toro and reached Fisher's Rancho as the blaze of camp-fires under the sycamores was beginning to show through the dusk. Here we found Major Hill, who, with Mr. Durivage and Midshipman Carnes, with six men from the wreck of the propeller Edith, had left Monterey the day before ourselves. Their fire was kindled, the cooking implements in order, and several of the party employed in the task of picking three wild geese and preparing them for the pan. While at supper, one of Capt. Fisher's men excited the sporting propensities of some of our party by describing a lake in the valley, where the geese roosted in immense quantities. As it was not more than a mile distant, muskets were got ready and four of the sportsmen set out by moonlight. They found some difficulty, however, in fishing out the geese after they were

shot, and only brought two with them at midnight. I, who was fatigued with my management of the Snake horse, crept into a cart-bed near the Rancho, laid a raw-hide over the top and was soon floating adrift on a sea of dreams.

We had harnessed and were off before the daybreak brightened into sunrise. As we passed the last mountain headland and the mouth of the valley lay wide before us, I noticed a dim vapor over the place where the Pueblo San José should stand. The reason of this was explained when we reached the entrance of the town. We were met by a hurricane of dust which for several minutes prevented our advancing a step; the adobe houses on each side were completely hidden, and we could only breathe by covering our faces with the loose folds of our jackets. Some wind intended for San Francisco had got astray among the mountains, and coming on San José unawares, had put in motion all the dust that had been quietly accumulating during the summer.

The two weeks which had elapsed since San José had been made a capital, were sufficient to have created a wonderful change. What with tents and houses of wood and canvas, in hot haste thrown up, the town seemed to have doubled in size. The dusty streets were thronged with people; goods, for lack of storage room, stood in large piles beside the doors; the sound of saw and hammer, and the rattling of laden carts, were incessant. The Legislative Building—a two-story adobe house built at the town's expense—was nearly finished. Hotels were springing up in all quarters; French *restaurateurs* hung out their signs on little one-story shanties; the shrewd Celestials had already planted themselves there, and summoned men to meals by the sound of their barbaric gongs. Our old stopping-place, the "Miner's Home," was converted into a "City Hotel," and when we drew up before

the door, we were instantly surrounded by purveyors from rival establishments, offering to purchase the two wild geese which hung at the wagon-tail. The roads to Monterey, to Stockton, to San Francisco, and to the Embarcadero, were stirring with continual travel. The price of lots had nearly doubled in consequence of this change, so that the town lost nothing by its gift of the legislative building to Government.

The ambulance, carrying Mr. Semple, set out for Benicia along the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay. Those of us who were bound for San Francisco made search for other conveyances. Hearing that a launch was about starting, I walked down to the Embarcadero, about seven miles distant, where I found a dozen vessels anchored in an estuary which ran up among the tulé. One of them was to leave that night at ten o'clock; the fare was \$10, and the time dependent on the wind, but usually varying from two to four days. I gave up the chance at once, and retracing my steps to the nearest ford, crossed Coyote River and struck across the meadows towards Whisman's Ranche, which I reached after two hours' walk. Evening came on while I was journeying alone in the midst of the boundless landscape—boundless, but for the shadowy mountain-piles which lay along the horizon, seeming, through the haze, like the hills of another planet which had touched the skirts of the globe on its journey through space. Long lines of geese and brant sailed through the air, and the white crane, from his covert on the edge of the marsh, uttered at intervals his strong, guttural cry. As the sunset gathered to a blaze, the mountains across the bay were suffused with a rosy purple tint, while those against the western sky stood in deep violet shadow. At last, the sounds of animal life died away on the plain, and the stars were gradually kindled in the cloudless firmament

By this time I had approached a fine old grove, detached from the shore of timber. The sound of musket shots and the braying of mules told that a party had encamped there. No sooner had I reached the shadow of the trees than my name was shouted, and I recognized Major Hill and my other friends of his party. I threw down my sarape, took a seat among them and employed myself on the breast of a goose. We sat cross-legged around a glowing fire, passing the pans and cups from hand to hand, and using fingers or knives according to the toughness of the meat. The mules were picketed among the oats which grew knee-deep under the trees, and a few paces off, around a still larger fire, the sailors and teamsters brewed their bucket of tea and broiled their huge slices of beef. Our meal over, we lighted our *puros* and stretched out at full length on the grass, enjoying to the full the quiet of the place and the soothing influence of the weed. And then came rest—rest delicious anywhere, but doubly so under the broad arms of the evergreen oak, with the full clear flood of moonlight broken into a thousand minute streams on the turf. It was a long time before I could compose myself to sleep. The solemn repose of the grove—the deep shadows of the trees—the far, misty, silvery glimpses of plain through the openings—wrought powerfully on my imagination and kept every faculty keenly alive. Even in sleep the impression remained, and when I awoke in the night, it was with a happy thrill at opening my eyes on the same maze of moonlight and foliage.

The next day I accompanied the party on foot, taking an occasional lift with the sailors in the wagon. The jolly tars were not at home on dry land, and seemed impatient to see the end of the journey. The driver was enjoined to keep a good look-out from the fore-top (the saddle-mule.) “Breakers ahead!” shouted

Jack, when we came to an arroyo ; “ hard up ! ” was the answer “ Take a reef in the aft wheel ! ” was the order of the driver The lock was clapped on, and we rode in triumph into a smoother sea. We nooned at Sanchez’ Rancho, reached the Mission Dolores at dusk, and started over the sand-hills in the moonlight. The jaded team stalled at the foot of a steep hill but was afterwards got off by unloading the wagon. I pushed on ahead, hearing the bustle and mingled sounds of the town, long before I reached it I struck the suburbs half a mile sooner than on my previous return, and from the first rise in the sand had an indistinct view of a place twice as large as I had left. I was too weary, however to take a long survey, but went directly to the Post Office, where I found Mr. Moore and his sons as cheerful, active and enterprising as ever, and was again installed in a comfortable nook of the garret.

CHAPTER XX.

SAN FRANCISCO AGAIN—POST-OFFICE EXPERIENCES.

DURING my absence in Monterey, more than four thousand emigrants by sea had landed in San Francisco. The excitement relative to gold-digging had been kept up by new discoveries on the various rivers ; the rage for land speculation had increased , and to all this was added the gathering heat of political conflict. San Francisco was something of a whirlpool before, but now it had widened its sweeps and seemed to be drawing everything into its vortex.

The morning after I arrived, I went about the town to note the changes and improvements. I could scarcely believe my eyes. The northern point, where the Bay pours its waters into the Golden Gate, was covered with houses nearly to the summit—many of them large three-story warehouses. The central and highest hill on which the town is built, was shorn of its chapparal and studded with tents and dwellings ; while to the eastward the streets had passed over the last of the three hills, and were beginning to encroach on the Happy Valley. The beautiful crescent of the harbor, stretching from the Rincon to Fort Montgomery, a distance of more than a mile, was lined with boats, tents and warehouses, and near the latter point, several piers jutted into the water. Montgomery street, fronting the Bay, had

undergone a marvellous change. All the open spaces were built up, the canvas houses replaced by ample three-story buildings, an Exchange with lofty sky-light fronted the water, and for the space of half a mile the throng of men of all classes, characters and nations, with carts and animals, equaled Wall street before three o'clock.

In other parts of the town the change was equally great. Tents and canvas houses had given place to large and handsome edifices, blanks had been filled up, new hotels opened, market houses in operation and all the characteristics of a great commercial city fairly established. Portsmouth Square was filled with lumber and house frames, and nearly every street in the lower part of the city was blocked up with goods. The change which had been wrought in all parts of the town during the past six weeks seemed little short of magic. At first I had difficulty in believing that what I looked upon was real, so utterly inadequate seemed the visible means for the accomplishment of such wonderful ends.

On my way to call upon Col. Frémont, whom I found located with his family in the Happy Valley, I saw a company of Chinese carpenters putting up the frame of a Canton-made house. In Pacific street another Celestial restaurant had been opened, and every vessel from the Chinese ports brought a fresh importation. An Olympic circus, on a very handsome scale, had been established, and a company of Ethiopian serenaders nightly amused the public. "Delmonico's" was the fashionable eating-house, where you had boiled eggs at seventy-five cents each, and dinner at \$1 50 to \$5, according to your appetite. A little muslin shed rejoiced in the title of "Irving House." A number of fine billiard rooms and bowling alleys had been opened, and all other devices for spending money brought into successful operation.

The gamblers complained no longer of dull prospects ; there were hundreds of monte, roulette and faro tables, which were crowded nightly until a late hour, and where the most inveterate excesses of gaming might be witnessed. The rents of houses had increased rather than fallen. I might give hundreds of instances, but it would be only a repetition of the stories I have already told. Money brought fourteen per cent. monthly, on loan. A gentleman of Baltimore, who came out in the Panama, sold for \$15,000 a steam engine which cost him \$2,000. Some drawing paper, which cost about \$10 in New York, brought \$164. I found little change in the prices of provisions and merchandise, though the sum paid for labor had diminished. Town lots were continually on the rise ; fifty vara lots in the Happy Valley, half a mile from town, brought \$3,500. I met with a number of my fellow passengers, nearly all of whom had done well, some of them having already realized \$20,000 and \$30,000.

The population of San Francisco at that time, was estimated at fifteen thousand ; a year before it was about five hundred. The increase since that time had been made in the face of the greatest disadvantages under which a city ever labored ; an uncultivated country, an ungenial climate, exorbitant rates of labor, want of building materials, imperfect civil organization—lacking everything, in short, but gold dust and enterprise. The same expense, on the Atlantic coast, would have established a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants. The price of lumber was still \$300 to \$400 per thousand feet. In addition to the five saw-mills at Santa Cruz, all the mills of Oregon were kept going, lumber, even there, bringing \$100 per thousand. There was no end to the springs of labor and traffic, which that vast emigration to Cali-

fornia had set in motion, not only on the Pacific Coast, but throughout all Polynesia and Australia.

The activity throughout the mining region during the fall season, gave rise to a thousand reports of golden discoveries, the effect of which was instantly seen on the new-comers. Their highest anticipations of the country seemed realized at once, and their only embarrassment was the choice of so many places of promise. The stories told were marvellous even to Californians; what wonder, then, that the green emigrants, who devoutly swallowed them whole, should be disappointed and disgusted with the reality? The actual yield on most of the rivers was, nevertheless, sufficiently encouraging. The diggers on the forks of the American, Feather and Yuba Rivers, met with a steady return for their labors. On the branches of the San Joaquin, as far as the Tuolumne, the big lumps were still found. Capt. Walker, who had a company on the Pituiuna—a stream that flows into the Tularè Lakes—was in Monterey, buying supplies at the time I left. His company was alone in that desolate region, and working to advantage, if one might judge from the secrecy which attended their movements. The placers on Trinity River had not turned out so well as was expected, and many of the miners were returning disappointed to the Sacramento. Several companies had been absent among the higher ridges of the Sierra Nevada, for a month or more, and it was suspected that they had discovered diggings somewhere on the eastern side.

The sickly season on the Sacramento and its tributaries, was nearly over, but numbers of pale, emaciated frames, broken down by agues and diarrhœas, were daily arriving in the launches and steamers. At least one-third of the miners suffered more or less from these diseases, and numbers of men who had landed only :

few months before, in the fulness of hale and lusty manhood, were walking about nearly as shrunken and bloodless as the corpses they would soon become. One of the most pitiable sights I ever beheld was one of these men, who had just been set ashore from a launch. He was sitting alone on a stone beside the water, with his bare feet purple with cold, on the cold, wet sand. He was wrapped from head to foot in a coarse blanket, which shook with the violence of his chill, as if his limbs were about to drop in pieces. He seemed unconscious of all that was passing; his long, matted hair hung over his wasted face; his eyes glared steadily forward, with an expression of suffering so utterly hopeless and wild, that I shuddered at seeing it. This was but one out of a number of cases, equally sad and distressing. The exposure and privations of a miner's life soon sap a frame that has not previously been hardened by the elements, and the maladies incident to a new country assail with double force the constitutions thus prepared to receive them.

I found the climate of San Francisco vastly improved during my absence. The temperature was more genial and equable, and the daily hurricanes of the summer had almost entirely ceased. As a consequence of this, the streets had a more active and pleasant aspect, and the continual whirl of business was enlivened by something like cheerfulness. Politics had taken root in this appropriate hot-bed of excitement, and was flourishing with a rapidity and vigor of growth which showed that, though an exotic plant, it would soon be native in the soil. Meetings were held nearly every night at Denison's Exchange, where the rival parties—for the different personal interests were not slow in arraying themselves against each other—had their speeches, their huzzas and their drinks. The Congressional candidates bore the brunt

of the struggle, since three or four of them were residents; but the Senatorship gave rise to the most deep-laid and complicated machinations. The principal candidates, T. Butler King, Col. Frémont and Dr. Gwin, had each his party of devoted adherents, who occupied the two weeks intervening between the nomination and election, in sounding and endeavoring to procure the votes of the candidates for the State Legislature, on whom the choice of Senators depended.

Col. Frémont was residing at the time in the Happy Valley, in a Chinese house, which he had erected on one of his lots. Mr. King was at Sonoma, where he had gone to recruit, after an illness which was near proving fatal. His friends, however, called a meeting in his favor, which was held in Portsmouth Square—an injudicious movement, as the consequence proved. Dr. Gwin was making an electioneering tour through the mining districts, for the purpose of securing the election of the proper Delegates to the State Senate and Assembly. It was curious how soon the American passion for politics, forgotten during the first stages of the State organization, revived and emulated the excitement of an election in the older States.

A day or two after my arrival, the Steamer Unicorn came into the harbor, being the third which had arrived without bringing a mail. These repeated failures were too much for even a patient people to bear; an indignation meeting in Portsmouth Square was called, but a shower, heralding the rainy season, came on in time to prevent it. Finally, on the last day of October, on the eve of the departure of another steamer down the coast, the Panama came in, bringing the mails for July, August and September all at once! Thirty-seven mail-bags were hauled up to the little Post-Office that night, and the eight clerks were astounded by the

receipt of forty-five thousand letters, besides uncounted bushels of newspapers. I was at the time domiciled in Mr. Moore's garret and enjoying the hospitalities of his plank-table ; I therefore offered my services as clerk-extraordinary, and was at once vested with full powers and initiated into all the mysteries of counting, classifying and distributing letters.

The Post-Office was a small frame building, of one story, and not more than forty feet in length. The entire front, which was graced with a narrow portico, was appropriated to the windows for delivery, while the rear was divided into three small compartments—a newspaper room, a private office, and kitchen. There were two windows for the general delivery, one for French and Spanish letters, and a narrow entry at one end of the building, on which faced the private boxes, to the number of five hundred, leased to merchants and others at the rate of \$1,50 per month. In this small space all the operations of the Office were carried on. The rent of the building was \$7,000 a year, and the salaries of the clerks from \$100 to \$300 monthly, which, as no special provision had been made by Government to meet the expense, effectually confined Mr. Moore to these narrow limits. For his strict and conscientious adherence to the law, he received the violent censure of a party of the San Franciscans, who would have had him make free use of the Government funds.

The Panama's mail-bags reached the Office about nine o'clock. The doors were instantly closed, the windows darkened, and every preparation made for a long siege. The attack from without commenced about the same time. There were knocks on the doors, taps on the windows, and beseeching calls at all corners of the house. The interior was well lighted ; the bags were emptied on the floor, and ten pairs of hands engaged in the assortment and

distribution of their contents. The work went on rapidly and noiselessly as the night passed away, but with the first streak of daylight the attack commenced again. Every avenue of entrance was barricaded ; the crowd was told through the keyhole that the Office would be opened that day to no one : but it all availed nothing. Mr. Mocre's Irish servant could not go for a bucket of water without being surrounded and in danger of being held captive. Men dogged his heels in the hope of being able to slip in behind him before he could lock the door.

We labored steadily all day, and had the satisfaction of seeing the huge pile of letters considerably diminished. Towards evening the impatience of the crowd increased to a most annoying pitch. They knocked ; they tried shouts and then whispers and then shouts again ; they implored and threatened by turns ; and not seldom offered large bribes for the delivery of their letters. "Curse such a Post-Office and such a Post-Master !" said one ; "I'll write to the Department by the next steamer. *We'll see whether things go on in this way much longer.*" Then comes a messenger slyly to the back-door : "Mr. — sends his compliments, and says you would oblige him very much by letting me have his letters ; he won't say anything about it to anybody." A clergyman, or perhaps a naval officer, follows, relying on a white cravat or gilt buttons for the favor which no one else can obtain. Mr. Moore politely but firmly refuses ; and so we work on, unmoved by the noises of the besiegers. The excitement and anxiety of the public can scarcely be told in words. Where the source that governs business, satisfies affection and supplies intelligence had been shut off from a whole community for three months, the rush from all sides to supply the void, was irresistible.

In the afternoon, a partial delivery was made to the owners of

private boxes. It was effected in a skillful way, though with some danger to the clerk who undertook the opening of the door. On account of the crush and destruction of windows on former occasions, he ordered them to form into line and enter in regular order. They at first refused, but on his counter-refusal to unlock the door complied with some difficulty. The moment the key was turned, the rush into the little entry was terrific ; the glass faces of the boxes were stove in, and the wooden partition seemed about to give way. In the space of an hour the clerk took in postage to the amount of \$600 ; the principal firms frequently paid from \$50 to \$100 for their correspondence.

We toiled on till after midnight of the second night, when the work was so far advanced that we could spare an hour or two for rest, and still complete the distribution in time for the opening of the windows, at noon the next day. So we crept up to our blankets in the garret, worn out by forty-four hours of steady labor. We had scarcely begun to taste the needful rest, when our sleep deep as it was, was broken by a new sound. Some of the besiegers, learning that the windows were to be opened at noon came on the ground in the middle of the night, in order to have the first chance for letters. As the nights were fresh and cool, they soon felt chilly, and began a stamping march along the portico, which jarred the whole building and kept us all painfully awake. This game was practised for a week after the distribution commenced, and was a greater hardship to those employed in the Office than their daily labors. One morning, about a week after this, a single individual came about midnight, bringing a chair with him, and some refreshments. He planted himself directly opposite the door, and sat there quietly all night. It was the day for dispatching the Monterey mail, and one of the clerks got up abov

four o'clock to have it in readiness for the carrier. On opening the door in the darkness, he was confronted by this man, who, seated solemnly in his chair, immediately gave his name in a loud voice : " John Jenkins !"

When, finally, the windows were opened, the scenes around the office were still more remarkable. In order to prevent a general riot among the applicants, they were recommended to form in ranks. This plan once established, those inside could work with more speed and safety. The lines extended in front all the way down the hill into Portsmouth Square, and on the south side across Sacramento street to the tents among the chapparal ; while that from the newspaper window in the rear stretched for some distance up the hill. The man at the tail of the longest line might count on spending six hours in it before he reached the window. Those who were near the goal frequently sold out their places to impatient candidates, for ten, and even twenty-five dollars ; indeed, several persons, in want of money, practised this game daily, as a means of living ! Venders of pies, cakes and newspapers established themselves in front of the office, to supply the crowd, while others did a profitable business by carrying cans of coffee up and down the lines.

The labors of the Post Office were greatly increased by the necessity of forwarding thousands of letters to the branch offices or to agents among the mountains, according to the orders of the miners. This part of the business, which was entirely without remuneration, furnished constant employment for three or four clerks. Several persons made large sums by acting as agents, supplying the miners with their letters, at \$1 each, which included the postage from the Atlantic side. The arrangements

for the transportation of the inland mail were very imperfect, and these private establishments were generally preferred.

The necessity of an immediate provision for the support of all branches of Government service, was, (and still remains, at the time I write,) most imminent. Unless something be speedily done, the administration of many offices in California must become impossible. The plan of relief is simple and can readily be accomplished—in the Civil Department, by a direct increase of emolument, in the Military and Naval, by an advance in the price of rations, during service on the Pacific Coast. Our legislators appear hardly to understand the enormous standard of prices, and the fact that many years must elapse before it can be materially lessened. Men in these days will not labor for pure patriotism, when the country is so well able to pay them.

CHAPTER XXI.

SACRAMENTO RIVER AND CITY.

THE change of temperature following the heavy shower which fell the day after my arrival at San Francisco, seemed to announce the near approach of the rainy season. I made all haste, therefore, to start on my tour through the northern placers, fearing lest it might be made impossible by a longer delay. The schooner *James L. Day* was advertised to leave for Sacramento City about the time we had finished distributing the mail, and as no preparation is required for a journey in California, I took my sarape and went down to Clark's Point, which is to San Francisco what Whitehall is to New York. The fare was \$14, which included our embarkation—a matter of some little consequence, when \$5 was frequently paid to be rowed out to a vessel. There were about seventy passengers on board, the greater part of whom had just arrived in the steamer *Panama*. The schooner was a trim, beautiful craft, that had weathered the gales of Cape Horn. A strong wind was blowing from the south, with a rain coming up as we hoisted anchor and fired a parting gun. We passed the islands of Yerba Buena and Alcatraz, looked out through the Golden Gate on the Pacific, and dashed into the strait connecting the Bay of San Francisco with Pablo Bay, before a ten-knot

breeze. This strait, six miles in length and about three in breadth, presents a constant variety of scene, from the irregularity of its mountain-shores. In the middle of it stands an island of red volcanic rock, near which are two smaller ones, white with uano, called The Brothers. At the entrance of Pablo Bay are two others, The Sisters, similar in size and form.

Pablo Bay is nearly circular, and about twelve miles in diameter. The creeks of Napa, Petaluma and San Rafael empty into it on the northern side, opposite Mare Island, so called from a wild mare who was formerly seen at the head of a band of elk, galloping over its broad meadows. We had but a dim glimpse of the shore through the rain. Our schooner bent to the wind, and cut the water so swiftly, that it fairly whistled under her sharp prow. The spray dashed over the deck and the large sails were motionless in their distension, as we ran before the gale, at a most exhilarating speed. A very good dinner at \$1, was served up in the eight-by-ten cabin and there was quite a run upon the cook's galley, for pies, at \$1 apiece.

We speedily made the entrance to the Straits of Carquinez where the mountains approach to within three-quarters of a mile. Several of the newly-arrived emigrants expressed themselves delighted with the barren shores and scanty patches of chapparal. It was their first view of the inland scenery of California. The rain had already brought out a timid green on the hills, and the soil no longer looked parched and dead. "Ah!" said one of the company, "what beautiful mountains! this California is really a splendid country." "Very well," thought I, "but if you dig less gold than you anticipate, catch the ague or fail in speculation, what will you say then? Will not the picture you draw be as dark and forbidding as it is now delightful?"

We passed a small sail-boat, bound for Sacramento and filled with emigrants. Half of them were employed in bailing out the scud thrown over the gunwale by every surge. We shot by them like a flash, and came in sight of Benicia, once thought to be a rival to San Francisco. In a glen on the opposite shore is the little town of Martinez. Benicia is a very pretty place; the situation is well chosen, the land gradually sloping back from the water, with ample space for the spread of the town. The anchorage is excellent, vessels of the largest size being able to lie so near shore as to land goods without lightering. The back country, including the Napa and Sonoma valleys, is one of the finest agricultural districts of California. Notwithstanding these advantages, Benicia must always remain inferior, in commercial importance, both to San Francisco and Sacramento City. While in the country, I was much amused in reading the letters respecting it, which had been sent home and published, many of them predicting the speedy downfall of San Francisco, on account of the superior advantages of the former place. On the strength of these letters vessels had actually cleared for Benicia, with large cargoes. Now, anchorage is one thing, and a good market another; a ship may lie in greater safety at Albany, but the sensible merchant charts his vessel for New York. San Francisco is marked by Nature and Fate (though many will disagree with me in the first half of the assertion) for the great commercial mart of the Pacific, and whatever advantages she may lack will soon be amply provided for by her wealth and enterprise.

Benicia—very properly, as I think—has been made the Naval and Military Station for the Bay. Gen. Smith and Commodore Jones both have their head quarters there. The General's house and the military barracks are built on a headland at the entrance

of Suisun Bay—a breezy and healthy situation. Monte Diablo, the giant of the Coast Range, rises high and blue on the other side of the strait, and away beyond the waters of the Bay, beyond the waste marshes of tulé and the broad grazing plains, and above the low outlines of many an intermediate chain, loom up faint and far and silvery, the snows of the Sierra Nevada.

We came to off New-York-of-the-Pacific in four hours after leaving San Francisco—a distance of fifty miles. The former place, with its aspiring but most awkward name, is located on a level plain, on the southern shore of Suisun Bay, backed by a range of barren mountains. It consists of three houses, one of which is a three-story one, and several vessels at anchor near the shore. The anchorage is good, and were it not for the mosquitos, the crews might live pleasantly enough, in their seclusion. There never will be a large town there, for the simple reason that there is no possible cause why there *should* be one. Stockton and Sacramento City supply the mines, San Francisco takes the commerce, Benicia the agricultural produce, with a fair share of the inland trade, and this Gotham-of-the-West, I fear, must continue to belie its title.

We anchored, waiting for the steamer Sacramento, which was to meet the schooner and receive her passengers. She came along side after dark, but owing to the violence of the rain, did not leave until midnight. She was a small, light craft, not more than sixty feet in length, and had been shipped to San Francisco around Cape Horn. She was at first employed to run between Sacramento City and San Francisco, but proved insufficient to weather the rough seas of the open Bay. The arrival of the steamer McKim, which is a good sea-boat and therefore adapted to the navigation of the Bay, where the waves are little less violent than

in the Pacific, drove her from the route, but she still continued to run on the Sacramento River. Many small steamers, of similar frail construction, were sent around the Horn, the speculators imagining they were the very thing for inland navigation. The engine of the Sacramento was on deck, as also was her den of a cabin—a filthy place, about six feet by eight. A few berths, made of two coarse blankets laid on a plank, were to be had at \$5 each ; but I preferred taking a camp-stool, throwing my sarape over my shoulders and sleeping with my head on the table, rather than pay such an unchristian price.

As the day dawned, gloomy and wet, I went on deck. We were near the head of "The Slough," a broad navigable cut-off, which saves twenty miles in making the trip. The banks are lined with thickets, behind which extends a narrow belt of timber, principally oak and sycamore. Here and there, in cleared spots, were the cabins of the woodmen, or of squatters, who intend claiming preëmption rights. The wood, which brings \$12 or \$15 a cord, is piled on the bluff banks, and the steamers back up to it, whenever they are obliged to "wood up." At the junction of the slough with the river proper, there is a small village of Indian huts, built of dry tulé reeds.

The Sacramento is a beautiful stream. Its width varies from two to three hundred yards, and its banks fringed with rich foliage, present, by their continuous windings, a fine succession of views. In appearance, it reminded me somewhat of the Delaware. The foliage, washed by the rain, glistened green and freshly in the morning ; and as we advanced the distant mountains on either hand were occasionally visible through gaps in the timber. Before reaching the town of Sutter, we passed a ranche, the produce of which, in vegetables alone, was said to have returned the owner

...a German, by the name of Schwartz—\$25,000 during the season. Sutter is a town of some thirty houses, scattered along the bank for half a mile. Three miles above this we came in sight of Sacramento City. The forest of masts along the embarcadere more than rivalled the splendid growth of the soil. Boughs and spars were mingled together in striking contrast; the cables were fastened to the trunks and sinewy roots of the trees; sign-boards and figure-heads were set up on shore, facing the levee, and galleys and deck-cabins were turned out "to grass," leased as shops, or occupied as dwellings. The aspect of the place, on landing, was decidedly more novel and picturesque than that of any other town in the country.

The plan of Sacramento City is very simple. Situated on the eastern bank of the Sacramento, at its junction with the Rio Americano, the town plot embraces a square of about one and a-half miles to a side. It is laid out in regular right-angles, in Philadelphia style, those running east and west named after the alphabet, and those north and south after the arithmetic. The limits of the town extended to nearly one square mile, and the number of inhabitants, in tents and houses, fell little short of ten thousand. The previous April there were just four houses in the place! Can the world match a growth like this?

The original forest-trees, standing in all parts of the town, give it a very picturesque appearance. Many of the streets are lined with oaks and sycamores, six feet in diameter, and spreading ample boughs on every side. The emigrants have ruined the finest of them by building camp-fires at their bases, which, in some instances, have burned completely through, leaving a charred and blackened arch for the superb tree to rest upon. The storm which occurred a few days previous to my visit, snapped asunder

several trunks which had been thus weakened, one of them crushing to the earth a canvas house in which a man lay asleep. A heavy bough struck the ground on each side of him, saving his life. The destruction of these trees is the more to be regretted, as the intense heat of the Summer days, when the mercury stands at 120°, renders their shade a thing of absolute necessity.

The value of real estate in Sacramento City is only exceeded by that of San Francisco. Lots twenty by seventy-five feet, in the best locations, brought from \$3,000 to \$3,500. Rents were on a scale equally enormous. The City Hotel, which was formerly a saw-mill, erected by Capt. Sutter, paid \$30,000 per annum. A new hotel, going up on the levee, had been already rented at \$35,000. Two drinking and gaming-rooms, on a business street, paid each \$1,000, monthly, invariably in advance. Many of the stores transacted business averaging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 daily. Board was \$20 per week at the restaurants and \$5 per day at the City Hotel. But what is the use of repeating figures? These dead statistics convey no idea of the marvellous state of things in the place. It was difficult enough for those who saw to believe, and I can only hope to reproduce the very faintest impression of the pictures I there beheld. It was frequently wondered, on this side of the Rocky Mountains, why the gold dust was not sent out of the country in larger quantities, when at least forty thousand men were turning up the placers. The fact is, it was required as currency, and the amount in circulation might be counted by millions. Why, the building up of a single street in Sacramento City (J street) cost *half a million*, at least! The value of all the houses in the city, frail and perishing as many of them were, could not have been less than \$2,000,000.

It must be acknowledged there is another side to the picture

Three-fourths of the people who settle in Sacramento City are visited by agues diarrhœas and other reducing complaints. In Summer the place is a furnace, in Winter little better than a swamp ; and the influx of emigrants and discouraged miners generally exceeds the demand for labor. A healthy, sensible, wide-awake man, however, cannot fail to prosper. In a country where Labor rules everything, no sound man has a right to complain. When carpenters make a strike because they only get *twelve dollars* a day, one may be sure there is room enough for industry and enterprise of all kinds.

The city was peopled principally by New-Yorkers, Jerseymen and people from the Western States. In activity and public spirit, it was nothing behind San Francisco ; its growth, indeed, in view of the difference of location, was more remarkable. The inhabitants had elected a Town Council, adopted a City Charter and were making exertions to have the place declared a port of entry. The political waters were being stirred a little, in anticipation of the approaching election. Mr. Gilbert, of the Alta California, and Col. Steuart, candidate for Governor, were in the city. A political meeting, which had been held a few nights before, in front of the City Hotel, passed off as uproariously and with as zealous a sentiment of patriotism as such meetings are wont to exhibit at home. Among the residents whom I met during my visit, was Gen. Green, of Texas, known as commander of the Mier Expedition.

The city already boasted a weekly paper, the *Placer Times*, which was edited and published by Mr. Giles, formerly of the Tribune Office. His printers were all old friends of mine—one of them, in fact, a former fellow-apprentice—and from the fraternal feeling that all possess who have ever belonged to the craft, the

place became at once familiar and home-like. The little paper which had a page of about twelve by eighteen inches, had a circulation of five hundred copies, at \$12 a year; the amount received weekly for jobs and advertising, varied from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Tickets were printed for the different political candidates, at the rate of \$20 for every thousand. The compositors were paid \$15 daily. Another compositor from the Tribune Office had established a restaurant, and was doing a fine business. His dining saloon was an open tent, unfloored; the tables were plank, with rough benches on each side; the waiters rude Western boys who had come over the Rocky Mountains—but the meals he furnished could not have been surpassed in any part of the world for substantial richness of quality. There was every day abundance of elk steaks, unsurpassed for sweet and delicate flavor; venison, which had been fattened on the mountain acorns; mutton, such as nothing but the wild pastures of California could produce; salmon and salmon-trout of astonishing size, from the Sacramento River, and now and then the solid flesh of the grizzly bear. The salmon-trout exceeded in fatness any fresh-water fish I ever saw; they were between two and three feet in length, with a layer of pure fat, quarter of an inch in thickness, over the ribs. When made into chowder or stewed in claret, they would have thrown into ecstasies the most inveterate Parisian gourmand. The full-moon face of the proprietor of the restaurant was accounted for, when one had tasted his fare; after living there a few days, I could feel my own dimensions sensibly enlarged.

The road to Sutter's Fort, the main streets and the levee fronting on the Embarcadero, were constantly thronged with the teams of emigrants, coming in from the mountains. Such worn, weather-beaten individuals I never before imagined. Their tents were

pitched by hundreds in the thickets around the town, where they rested a few days before starting to winter in the mines and elsewhere. At times the levee was filled throughout its whole length by their teams, three or four yoke of oxen to every wagon. The beasts had an expression of patient experience which plainly showed that no roads yet to be traveled would astonish them in the least. After tugging the wagons for six months over the salt deserts of the Great Basin, climbing passes and cañons of terrible asperity in the Sierra Nevada, and learning to digest oak bark on the arid plains around the sink of Humboldt's River, it seemed as if no extremity could henceforth intimidate them. Much toil and suffering had given to their countenances a look of almost human wisdom. If their souls should hereafter, according to the theory of some modern philosophers, reappear in human frames, what a crowd of grave and reverend sages may not California be able to produce! The cows had been yoked in with the oxen and made to do equal duty. The women who had come by the overland route appeared to have stood the hardships of the journey remarkably well, and were not half so loud as the men in their complaints.

The amount of gambling in Sacramento City was very great, and the enticement of music was employed even to a greater extent than in San Francisco. All kinds of instruments and tunes made night discordant, for which harrowing service the performers were paid an ounce each. Among the many drinking houses, there was one called "The Plains," which was much frequented by the emigrants. Some western artist, who came across the country, adorned its walls with scenic illustrations of the route, such as Independence Rock, The Sweet-Water Valley, Fort Laramie, Wind River Mountains, etc. There was one of a pass in the Sierra Nevada, on the Carson River route. A wagon and team

were represented as coming down the side of a hill so nearly perpendicular that it seemed no earthly power could prevent them from making but a single fall from the summit to the valley. These particular oxen, however, were happily independent of gravitation, and whisked their tails in the face of the zenith, as they marched slowly down.

I was indebted for quarters in Sacramento City, to Mr. De Graw, who was installed in a frame house, copper-roofed, fronting the levee. I slept very comfortably on a pile of Chinese quilts, behind the counter, lulled by the dashing of the rain against the sides of the house. The rainy season had set in, to all appearances, though it was full a month before the usual time. The sky was bleak and gray, and the wind blew steadily from the south, an unfailing sign to the old residents. The saying of the Mexicans seemed to be verified, that, wherever *los Yankis* go, they take rain with them.

It was therefore the more necessary that I should start at once for the mountains. In a few weeks the roads would be impassable, and my only chance of seeing the northern rivers be cut off. The first requisite for the journey was a good horse, to procure which I first attended the horse-market which was daily held towards the bottom of K street. This was one of the principal sights in the place, and as picturesque a thing as could be seen anywhere. The trees were here thicker and of larger growth than in other parts of the city; the market-ground in the middle of the street was shaded by an immense evergreen oak, and surrounded by tents of blue and white canvas. One side was flanked by a livery-stable—an open frame of poles, roofed with dry tulé, in which stood a few shivering mules and raw-boned horses, while the stacks of hay and wheat straw, on the open lots in the vicinity

offered feed to the buyers of animals, at the rate of \$3 daily for each head.

When the market was in full blast, the scene it presented was grotesque enough. There were no regulations other than the fancy of those who had animals to sell; every man was his own auctioneer, and showed off the points of his horses or mules. The ground was usually occupied by several persons at once,—a rough tawny-faced, long-bearded Missourian, with a couple of pack mules which had been starved in the Great Basin; a quondam New York dandy with a horse whose back he had ruined in his luckless “prospecting” among the mountains; a hard-fisted farmer with the wagon and ox-team which had brought his family and household gods across the continent; or, perhaps, a jocky trader, who understood all the arts of depreciation and recommendation, and invariably sold an animal for much more than he gave. The bids were slow, and the seller would sometimes hang for half an hour without an advance; in fact, where three or four were up at once, it required close attention in the buyer to know which way the competition was running.

I saw a lean sorrel mule sold for \$55; several others, of that glossy black color and clean make which denote spirit and endurance, were held at \$140, the owner refusing to let them go for less. The owner of a bay horse, which he rode up and down the market at a brisk pace, could get no bid above \$45. As the animal was well made and in good condition, I was about to bid, when I noticed a peculiar glare of the eye which betrayed suffering of some kind. “What kind of a back has he?” I inquired. “It is a very little scratched on the top,” was the answer; “but he is none the worse for that.” “He’ll not do for me,” I thought, but I watched the other bidders to see how the buyer would be

satisfied with his purchase. The horse was finally knocked off at \$50: as the saddle was not included the new owner removed it disclosing a horriole patch of raw and shrinking flesh. An altercation instantly arose, which was not settled when I left to seek a horse elsewhere.

The owner of a stack of hay near at hand desired to sell me a mule out of a number which he had in charge. But one which he recommended as a fine saddle-mule would not go at all, though he wounded her mouth with the cruel bit of the country in the effort to force her into a trot; another, which was declared to be remarkably gentle, stumbled and fell with me, and a third, which seemed to be really a good traveler, was held at a price I did not desire to pay. At last, the proprietor of a sort of tavern adjoining the market, offered to sell me a gray mare for \$100. Now, as the gray mare is said to be the better horse, and as, on trial, I found her to possess a steady and easy gait, though a little lazy, I determined to take her, since, among so many worn-out and used-up animals, it seemed a matter of mere luck whether I would have selected a good one. The mare was American, but the owner assured me she had been long enough in the country, to travel unshod and keep fat on dry grass. As saddles, blankets, and other articles were still necessary, my outfit was rather expensive. I procured a tolerable saddle and bridle for \$10; a lariat and saddle-blanket for \$5; a pair of sharp Mexican spurs for \$8, and blankets for \$12. With a hunting-knife, a pair of pistols in my pocket, a compass, thermometer, note-book and pencil, I was prepared for a tour of any length among the mountains.

CHAPTER XXII.

TRAVELING ON THE PLAINS.

I WAITED another day for the rain to subside, but the wind still blew up the river and the sky remained hopelessly murky and lowering. I therefore buttoned up my corduroy coat, thrust my head through the centre of my sarape, and set out in the teeth of the gale. Leaving the muddy streets, swamped tents and shivering population of Sacramento City, a ride of a mile and a half brought me to Sutter's Fort, built on a slight rise in the plain. It is a large quadrangular structure, with thick adobe walls, and square bastions at each corner. Everything about it showed signs of dilapidation and decay. The corrals of earth had been trampled down ; doors and gateways were broken through the walls, and all kinds of building materials carried away. A two story wooden building, with flag-staff bearing the American colors, stood in the centre of the court-yard, and low ranges of buildings around the sides were variously occupied as hospitals, stores, drinking and gaming shops and dwellings. The hospital, under the charge of Drs Deal and Martin, was said to be the best regulated in the district. It was at the time filled with fever patients, who received nursing and medical attendance for \$100 per week.

Behind the fort, at the distance of quarter of a mile, flows the

Rio Americano, with several fine grazing ranches on its banks. The view on all sides is over a level plain, streaked with lines of timber, and bounded on the east and west, in clear weather, by the distant ranges of the Coast Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Three or four houses have sprung up on the low ground in front of the fort during the summer. Riding up to a large unfinished frame building to make inquiries about the road, I was answered by a man whom I afterwards learned was the notorious Keysburg the same who came out with the emigration of 1846, and lived all winter among the mountains on the dead bodies of his companions. He was of a stout, large frame, with an exceedingly coarse, sensual expression of countenance, and even had I not heard his revolting history, I should have marked him as a wholly animal face. It remains in my memory now like that of an ogre, and I only remember it with a shudder. One of those who went out to the Camp of Death, after the snows were melted, described to me the horrid circumstances under which they found him—seated like a ghoul, in the midst of dead bodies, with his face and hands smeared with blood, and a kettle of human flesh boiling over the fire. He had become a creature too foul and devilish for this earth, and the forbearance with which the men whose children he had devoured while they were toiling back to his succor through almost fathomless snows, refrained from putting him to death, is to be wondered at. He had not the plea of necessity in the use of this revolting food; for the body of an ox, which had been thawed out of the snow, was found untouched near his cabin. He spoke with a sort of fiendish satisfaction, of the meals he had made, and the men were obliged to drag him away from them by main force, not without the terrible conviction that some of the victims had been put to a violent death.

to glut his appetite. There is no creation in the whole range of fiction, so dark and awful in its character, as this man.

After passing the first belt of timber, I was alone on the plains which looked strikingly bleak and desolate under the dark and rainy sky. The road was filled with pools of mud and water, by which, when night came down on the changeless waste, I was enabled to find my way. The rain set in again, adding greatly to the discomfort of such travel. My gray mare, too, lagged more than I liked, and I began to calculate my chances of remaining all night on the plain. About two hours after dark, however, a faint light glimmered in the distance, and I finally reached the place of my destination—Murphy's Rancho on the Cosumne River. An Indian boy tied my horse to a haystack, and Mrs. Murphy set about baking some biscuit in a pan, and roasting a piece of beef for me on a wooden spit. A company of gold-diggers, on their way from the Yuba to winter on the Mariposa, had possession of one end of the house, where they lay rolled in their blankets, their forms barely discernible through the smoke sent out by the rain-soaked wood of which their fire was made. I talked an hour with them about the prospects of mining on the different rivers, and then lay down to sleep on the clay floor.

The next morning the sky was as thick, heavy and gray as a Mackinaw blanket, with a precocious drizzle, betokening a storm. Nevertheless, I saddled and started for Hick's Rancho, a day's journey distant, in the edge of the mountains. I forded the Cosumne River, (almost universally pronounced *Mokosumé*,) at this place a clear, swift stream, bordered by dense thickets. It was already up to my saddle-skirts, and rapidly rising. Two or three tulé huts stood on the opposite bank, and a number of dirty, stupid Indian faces stared at me through the apertures. Taking

a dim wagon-trail, according to directions, I struck out once more on the open plains. The travel was very toilsome, my horse's feet sinking deeply into the wet, soft soil. The further I went the worse it became. After making five miles, I reached some scattering oak timber, where I was forced to take shelter from the rain, which now beat down drenchingly. Cold and wet, I waited two hours in that dismal solitude for the flood to cease, and taking advantage of the first lull, turned about and rode back to the ranche. All that night it rained hard, and the second morning opened with a prospect more dreary than ever.

My companions in that adobe limbo were the miners, who had been spending the Summer on the upper bars of the Yuba. According to their accounts, the average yield of the Yuba diggings was near two ounces for each man. Those who had taken out claims of eight paces square in the beginning of the season, frequently made \$10,000 and upwards. Owing to the severity of the Winter in that region, the greater portion of the miners were moving southward until the Spring. Several companies came up in the course of the day, but as the ranche was full, they were constrained to pitch their tents along the banks of the swollen Cosumne. Mr. Murphy, I found, was the son of the old gentleman whose hospitalities I had shared in the valley of San José. He had been living three years on the river, and his three sturdy young sons could ride and throw the lariat equal to any Californian. There were two or three Indian boys belonging to the house, one of whom, a solid, shock-headed urchin, as grave as if he was born to be a "medicine-man," did all the household duties with great precision and steadiness. He was called "Billy," and though he understood English as well as his own language, I never heard him speak. My only relief, during the wearisome detention, was

in watching his deliberate motions, and wondering what thoughts or whether any thoughts stirred under his immoveable face.

The afternoon of the second day the clouds lifted, and we saw the entire line of the Sierra Nevada, white and cold against the background of the receding storm. As the sun broke forth, near its setting, peak after peak became visible, far away to north and south, till the ridge of eternal snow was unbroken for at least a hundred and fifty miles. The peaks around the head-waters of the American Fork, highest of all, were directly in front. The pure white of their sides became gradually imbued with a rosy flame, and their cones and pinnacles burned like points of fire. In the last glow of the sun, long after it had set to us, the splendor of the whole range, deepening from gold to rose, from rose to crimson, and fading at last into an ashy violet, surpassed even the famous "Alp-glow," as I have seen it from the plains of Piedmont.

An old hunter living on the ranche came galloping up, with a fat, black-tailed doe at the end of his lariat. He had first broken the hind leg of the poor beast with a ball, and then caught her running. The pleading expression of her large black eyes was almost human, but her captor coolly drew his knife across her throat, and left her to bleed to death. She lay on the ground, uttering a piteous bleat as her panting became thick and difficult, but not until the last agony was wholly over, did the dull film steal across the beauty of her lustrous eyes.

On the third morning I succeeded in leaving the ranche, where I had been very hospitably entertained at four dollars a day for myself and horse. The Cosumne was very much swollen by the rains, but my gray mare swam bravely, and took me across with but a slight wetting. I passed my previous halting-place, and was

advancing with difficulty through the mud of the plains, when, on climbing a small "rise," I suddenly found myself confronted by four grizzly bears—two of them half-grown cubs—who had possession of a grassy bottom on the other side. They were not more than two hundred yards distant. I halted and looked at them, and they at me, and I must say they seemed the most unconcerned of the two parties. My pistols would kill nothing bigger than a coyote, and they could easily have outrun my horse; so I went my way, keeping an eye on the most convenient tree. In case of an attack, the choice of a place of refuge would have been a delicate matter, since the bears can climb up a large tree and gnaw down a small one. It required some skill, therefore, in selecting a trunk of proper size. At Murphy's, the night previous, they told me there had been plenty of "bear-sign" along the river, and in the "pockets" of solid ground among the tulé. As the rainy season sets in they always come down from the mountains.

After traveling eight or ten miles the wagon trails began to scatter, and with my imperfect knowledge of prairie hieroglyphics, I was soon at fault. The sky was by this time clear and bright; and rather than puzzle myself with wheel-tracks leading everywhere, and cattle-tracks leading nowhere, I guessed at the location of the ranche to which I was bound and took a bee-line towards it.

The knowledge of tracks and marks is a very important part of the education of a woodsman. It is only obtained by unlearning, or forgetting for the time, all one's civilized acquirements and recalling the original instincts of the animal. An observing man, fresh from the city, might with some study determine the character of a track, but it is the habit of observing them rather than the discriminating faculty, which enables the genuine hunter to peruse the earth like a volume, and confidently pronounce on the number

and character of all the animals and men that have lately passed over its surface. Where an inexperienced eye could discern no mark, he will note a hundred trails, and follow any particular one through the maze, with a faculty of sight as unerring as the power of scent in a dog. I was necessitated, during my journey in the interior of California, to pay some attention to this craft, but I never got beyond the rudiments.

Another necessary faculty, as I had constant occasion to notice, is that of observing and remembering the form, color and character of animals. This may seem a simple thing; but let any one, at the close of a ride in the country, endeavor to describe all the horses, mules and oxen he has seen, and he will find himself at fault. A Californian will remember and give a particular description of a hundred animals, which he has passed in a day's journey, and be able to recognize and identify any one of them. Horses and mules are to him what men, newspapers, books and machinery are to us; they are the only science he need know or learn. The habit of noticing them is easily acquired, and is extremely useful in a country where there are neither pounds nor fences.

The heavy canopy of clouds was lifted from the plain almost as suddenly as the cover from a roast turkey at a hotel dinner, when the head waiter has given the wink. The snows of the Nevada shone white along the clear horizon; I could see for many a league on every side, but I was alone on the broad, warm landscape. Over wastes of loose, gravelly soil, into which my horse sank above the fetlocks—across barren ridges, alternating with marshy hollows and pools of water, I toiled for hours, and near sunset reached the first low, timbered hills on the margin of the plain. I dismounted and led my weary horse for a mile or two, but as it grew dark was obliged to halt in a little glen—a most bear-ish looking place

filled with thick chapparal. A fallen tree supplied me with fuel to hand, and I soon had a glowing fire, beside which I spread my blankets and lay down. Getting up at midnight to throw on more logs, I found my horse gone, and searched the chapparal for an hour, wondering how I should fare, trudging along on foot, with the saddle on my shoulders. At last I found her in a distant part of the wood, with the lariat wound around a tree. After this I slept no more, but lay gazing on the flickering camp-fire, and her gray figure as she moved about in the dusk. Towards dawn the tinkle of a distant mule-bell and afterwards the crowing of a cock gave me welcome signs of near habitation ; and, saddling with the first streak of light, I pushed on, still in the same direction, through a thick patch of thorny chapparal, and finally reached the brow of a wooded ridge just as the sun was rising.

Oh, the cool, fresh beauty of that morning ! The sky was deliciously pure and soft, and the tips of the pines on the hills were kindled with a rosy flame from the new-risen sun. Below me lay a beautiful valley, across which ran a line of timber, betraying, by its luxuriance, the water-course it shaded. The reaches of meadow between were green and sparkling with dew ; here and there, among the luxuriant foliage, peeped the white top of a tent, or rose the pale-blue threads of smoke from freshly-kindled camp-fires. Cattle were grazing in places, and the tinkle of the bell I had heard sounded a blithe welcome from one of the groups. Beyond the tents, in the skirts of a splendid clump of trees stood the very ranche to which I was bound.

I rode up and asked for breakfast. My twenty-four hours fast was broken by a huge slice of roast venison, and coffee sweetened with black Mexican sugar, which smacks not only of the juice of the cane, but of the leaves, joints, roots, and even the unctuous

soil in which it grows. For this I paid a dollar and a half, but no money could procure any feed for my famishing horse. Leaving the ranche, which is owned by a settler named Hicks, my road led along the left bank of Sutter's Creek for two miles, after which it struck into the mountains. Here and there, in the gulches, I noticed signs of the gold-hunters, but their prospecting did not appear to have been successful. The timber was principally pine and oak, and of the smaller growths, the red-barked madrono and a species of *esculus*, with a fruit much larger than our Western buckeye. The hills are steep, broken and with little apparent system. A close observation, however, shows them to have a gradual increase of elevation, to a certain point, beyond which they fall again. As in the sea the motion of the long swells is seen through all the small waves of the surface, so this broken region shows a succession of parallel ridges, regularly increasing in height till they reach the Sierra Nevada—the "tenth wave," with the white foam on its crest.

About noon, I came down again upon Sutter's Creek in a little valley, settled by miners. A number of tents were pitched along the stream, and some log houses for the winter were in process of erection. The diggings in the valley were quite profitable during the dry season, especially in a cañon above. At the time I passed, the miners were making from half an ounce to an ounce per day. I procured a very good dinner at Humphrey's tent, and attempted to feed my famishing gray with Indian meal at half a dollar the pound; but, starving as she was, she refused to eat it. Her pao had by this time dwindled to a very slow walk, and I could not find it in my heart to use the spur. Leaving the place immediately after dinner, I crossed a broad mountain, and descended to Jackson's Creek, where a still greater number of miners were

congregated. Not the Creek only, but all the ravines in the mountains around, furnished ground for their winter labors. A little knoll in the valley, above the reach of floods, was entirely covered with their white tents. The hotel tent was kept by an Oregonian named Cosgrove, and there was in addition a French restaurant.

From Jackson's Creek I took a footpath to the Mokelumne. After scaling the divide, I went down into a deep, wild ravine, where the path, notched along its almost perpendicular sides, threatened to give way beneath my horse's feet. Further down, the bottom was completely turned over by miners, a number of whom were building their log cabins. The rains had brought at last a constant supply of water, and pans and cradles were in full operation among the gravel; the miners were nearly all French men, and appeared to be doing well. The ravine finally *debouched* upon the river at the Middle Bar. I found the current deep and swollen by the rains, which had broken away all the dams made for turning it. The old brush town was nearly deserted, and very few persons were at work on the river banks, the high water having driven all into the gulches, which continued to yield as much as ever.

I forded the river with some difficulty, owing to the deep holes quarried in its channel, which sometimes plunged my horse down to the neck. On turning the point of a mountain a mile below, I came again in sight of the Lower Bar, and recognized the features of a scene which had become so familiar during my visit in August. The town was greatly changed. As I rode up the hill, I found the summer huts of the Sonorians deserted and the inhabitants gone; Baptiste's airy hotel, with its monte and dining tables, which had done us service as beds, was not to be found

I feared that all of my friends were gone, and I had made the journey in vain. The place was fast beginning to wear a look of desolation, when as I passed one of the tents, I was hailed by a rough-looking fellow dressed in a red flannel shirt and striped pocket. Who should it be but Dr. Gillette, the sharer of my grotesque ride to Stockton in the summer. After the first salutations were over, he conducted me to Mr. James' tent, where I found my old comrade, Col. Lyons, about sitting down to a smoking dinner of beef, venison and tortillas. Dr. Gwin, one of the candidates for U. S. Senator, had just arrived, and was likewise the guest of Mr. James. I joined him in doing execution at the table, with the more satisfaction, because my poor mare had about a quart of corn—the last to be had in the place—for her supper.

After dinner, Mr. Morse, of New Orleans, candidate for Congress, and Mr. Brooks, of New York, for the Assembly, made their appearance. We had a rare knot of politicians. Col. Lyons was a prominent candidate for the State Senate, and we only lacked the genial presence of Col. Steuart, and the jolly one of Capt. McDougal (who were not far off, somewhere in the diggings,) to have had all the offices represented, from the Governor downwards. After dinner, we let down the curtains of the little tent, stretched ourselves out on the blankets, lighted our cigars and went plump into a discussion of California politics. Each of the candidates had his bundle of tickets, his copies of the Constitution and his particular plans of action. As it happened there were no two candidates for the same office present, the discussion was carried on in perfect harmony and with a feeling of good-fellowship withal. Whatever the politics of the different aspirants, they were, socially, most companionable men. We will not disclose the mysteries of the conclave, but simply remark that every

one slept as soundly on his hard bed as though he were dreaming of a triumphant election.

The flood in the river, I found, had proved most disastrous to the operations on the bar. Mr. James' company, which, after immense labor and expense, had turned the channel for three hundred yards, and was just beginning to realize a rich profit from the river-bed, was suddenly stopped. The last day's washing amounted to \$1,700, and the richest portion of the bed was yet to be washed. The entire expense of the undertaking, which required the labor of forty men for nearly two months, was more than twenty thousand dollars, not more than half of which had been realized. All further work was suspended until the next summer, when the returns would probably make full amends for the delay and disappointment. The rich gulch was filled with miners, most of whom were doing an excellent business. The strata of white quartz crossing the mountains about half way up the gulch, had been tried, and found to contain rich veins of gold. A company of about twelve had commenced sinking a shaft to strike it at right angles. In fact, the metal had increased, rather than diminished in quantity, since my former visit.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JOURNEY TO THE VOLCANO.

MY first care in the morning was to procure forage for my mare. The effects of famine were beginning to show themselves in her appearance. She stood dejectedly beside the pine stump to which she was tethered, now and then gnawing a piece of the bark to satisfy the cravings of her stomach. Her flanks were thin and her sides hollow, and she looked so wistfully at me with her dull, sunken eyes, that I set out at once in the endeavor to procure something better than pine-bark for her breakfast. The only thing I could find in all the village was bread, five small rolls of which I bought at half a dollar apiece, and had the satisfaction of seeing her greedily devour them. This feed, however, was far too expensive, and rather than see her starve outright, I gave her to Gen. Morse, for the ride back to Sacramento City, his own horse having broken loose during the night. The grass, which had already begun to sprout, was not more than quarter of an inch in height, and afforded no sustenance to cattle. I therefore reluctantly decided to shorten my journey, and perform the remainder of it on foot.

The same night of my arrival on the river, I heard many stories about "The Volcano"—a place some twenty miles further into

the heart of the mountains, where, it was said, a very rich deposit of gold had been found, near the mouth of an extinct crater. I made due allowance for the size which gold lumps attain, the farther they roll, but a curiosity to see some of the volcanic appearances which are said to become frequent as you approach the snowy ridge, induced me to start in the morning after having seen my horse's head turned again towards the region of hay.

Dr. Gillette kindly offered to accompany me on the trip—an offer the more welcome, on account of the additional security it gave me against hostile Indians. The entire mountain district, above the Upper Bar (about four miles from the Lower Bar)—and particularly at the Forks of the Mokelumne—was overrun with Indians, some of whom were of the tribe of the old chief, Polo, and others of a tribe lately made hostile to the Americans by an affray at the Volcano. Polo, it was rumored had been shot; but I gave no credit to the report. He was much too cautious and cunning, to be entrapped. To the miners about that region, he was as much of a will-o'-the-wisp as Abdel-Kader was to the French. More than once he visited the diggings in disguise, and no small company, prospecting above the Forks, was safe from having a brush with his braves.

We took care to provide ourselves with a good double-barreled rifle before starting. Our route lay up the river to the Middle Bar. Climbing the mountain behind that place, we took a line for the Butte, a lofty, isolated peak, which serves as a landmark for the country between the Cosumne and the Mokelumne. Descending through wild, wooded ravines, we struck an Indian trail, with fresh tracks upon it. The thick chapparal, here and there, made us think of ambuscades, and we traveled more cautiously and silently than was actually needful. In the deep nooks and re-

resses of the mountains we noticed ruined huts and the ashes of deserted camp-fires. The gulches in all directions had been dug up by gold-hunters during the summer. One, in particular, at the foot of the Butte, showed—as we ascended it, for more than a mile—scarcely a foot of soil untouched. The amount of gold obtained from it must have been very great. The traces of these operations, deep in the wilderness, accounted for the fact of miners becoming suddenly rich, after disappearing from the Bars for a few days.

We climbed to the level of the mountain region, out of which the Butte towered a thousand feet above us. Our trail led eastward from its foot, towards the Sierra Nevada, whose shining summits seemed close at hand. The hills were dotted with forests of pine and oak, many specimens of the former tree rising to the height of two hundred and fifty feet. The cones, of a dark red color, were fully eighteen inches in length. The madrono, which rises to a stately tree in the mountains near Monterey, was here a rough shrub, looking, with its blood-red arms and lifeless foliage, as if it had been planted over a murderer's grave. The ground, in the sheltered hollows, was covered with large acorns, very little inferior to chesnuts in taste; the deer and bear become very fat at this season, from feeding upon them. They form the principal subsistence of the Indian tribes during the winter. In one of the ravines we found an "Indian wind-mill," as the miners call it—a flat rock, with half a dozen circular holes on its surface, beside each of which lay a round stone, used in pulverizing the acorns. We passed one or two inhabited camps a short distance from the trail, but were apparently unobserved. Further on, in the forest, we came suddenly upon two young Indians, who were going on a trail leading towards the Forks. They started at first to run, but

stopped when we hailed them ; they understood neither English nor Spanish, but some tobacco which the doctor gave them was very joyfully received.

The stillness and beauty of the shaded glens through which we traveled were very impressive. Threaded by clear streams which turned the unsightly holes left by the miners into pools of crystal, mirroring the boughs far above, their fresh, cool aspect was very different from the glowing furnaces they form in summer. The foliage was still very little changed ; only the leaves of the buck-eye had fallen, and its polished nuts filled the paths. The ash was turned to a blazing gold, and made a perpetual sunset in the woods. But the oak here wore an evergreen livery ; the grass was already shooting up over all the soil, and the Winter at hand was so decked in the mixed trappings of Summer Autumn and Spring, that we hardly recognized him.

Late in the afternoon we accidentally took a side trail, which led up a narrow ravine and finally brought us to an open space among the hills, where a company of prospecters were engaged in pitching their tent for the winter. They were seven in number, mostly sailors, and under the command of a Virginian named Woodhouse. Their pack-mules had just arrived with supplies from their former camp, and a half-naked Indian was trying to get some flour. On learning the scarcity of the article on the river, they refused to sell him any. He importuned them some time, but in vain : " Very well," said he, " you shall be driven off to-morrow," and went away. We were very hungry, and employed the cook of the company to get us something to eat. He built a fire, fried some salt pork, and made us a dish of pancakes. I could not help admiring the dexterity with which he tossed the cake in the air and caught it on the other side as it came down

into the pan. We ate with an animal voracity, for the usual California appetite—equal to that of three men at home—was sharpened by our long walk.

It was now beginning to grow dark, and a rain coming on. We were seven miles from the Volcano, and would have preferred remaining for the night, had the miners given any encouragement to our hints on the subject. Instead of this, it seemed to us that they were suspicious of our being spies upon their prospecting, so we left them and again plunged into the forest. Regaining the proper trail we went at a rapid rate through gloomy ravines, which were canopied by thick mist. It grew darker, and the rain began to fall. We pushed on in silence, hoping to reach some place of shelter, but the trail became more and more indistinct, till at last we kept it with our feet rather than our eyes. I think we must have walked in it a mile after we ceased entirely to see it. Once or twice we heard yells in the distance, which we took to be those of a party of the hostile Indians. The air grew pitchy dark, and the rain fell so fast, that we lost the trail and determined to stop for the night. We had just crossed a sort of divide, and our position, as near as we could tell in the gloom, was at the entrance of a deep ravine, entirely covered with forests, and therefore a tolerably secure covert. I had two or three matches in my pocket, from which we struck a flame, at the foot of a pine tree. We fed it daintily at first with the dry needles and filaments of bark, till it grew strong enough and hungry enough to dry its own fuel. Swinging with our whole weight to the ends of the boughs, we snapped off sufficient to last for the night, and then lay down on the dark side of the tree, with our arms between us to keep them dry. The cold, incessant rain, pouring down through the boughs, soon drenched us quite, and we crawled around to the other side

The Indians, like Death, love a shining mark ; and the thought of an arrow sent out of the gloom around us, made our backs feel uncomfortable as we stood before the fire. Lying in the rain, however, without blankets, was equally unpleasant ; so we took alternate half-hours of soaking and drying.

Salt pork and exercise combined, gave us an intolerable thirst, to allay which we made torches of cedar bark and went down to the bottom of the ravine for water. There was none to be found ; and we were about giving up the search when we came to a young pine, whose myriad needles were bent down with their burden of rain-drops. No nectar was ever half so delicious. We caught the twigs in our mouths and drained them dry, then cut down the tree and carried it back in triumph to our fire, where we planted it and let the rain fill up its aromatic beakers. The night seemed interminable. The sound of the rain was like stealthy footstep on the leaves ; the howling of wolves and the roar of water falls a distance, startled us. Occasionally, the tread of some animal among the trees—possibly a deer, attracted by the flame—put all our senses on the alert. Just before daybreak the storm ceased, and in ten minutes afterwards the sky was without a cloud.

The morning broke brightly and cheerily. We resumed the path, which led into a grassy meadow about a mile long, at the further end of which we struck a wagon trail. A saucy wolf came down to the edge of the woods, and barked at us most impertinently, but we did not think him worth the powder. The air was fragrant with the smell of cedar—a species of the *thuya*—which here grows to the height of two hundred feet. Its boles are perfectly straight and symmetrical, and may be split with the axe into boards and shingles. Many of the trees had been felled for this purpose, and lay by the roadside. From the top of a little

ridge we looked down into the valley of the Volcano, and could see the smoke rising from the tents. The encampment is in a deep basin surrounded by volcanic hills, several of which contain extinct craters. A small stream flows through the midst. The tents and cabins of the miners are on the lower slopes of the hills, and the diggings are partly in the basin and partly in gulches which branch off from its northern side. The location is very beautiful, and more healthy than the large rivers.

Descending into the valley, we stopped at a tent for breakfast, which was got ready by the only female in the settlement—a woman from Pennsylvania, whose husband died on the journey out. A number of the miners were from the same place. Maj. Bartlett of Louisiana, with his company, were also at work there; and in another valley, beyond the wooded ridge to the north-east, Capt. Jones of Illinois was located, with a company of about sixty men. The whole number of persons at this digging was nearly one hundred and fifty, and they had elected an Alcalde and adopted laws for their government. The supplies on hand were very scanty, but they had more on the way, which the first favorable weather would enable them to receive.

In addition to my motives of curiosity, in visiting the Volcano, I was empowered with a political mission to the diggers. The candidates on the Mokelumne gave me letters to some of them, and packages of tickets which I was enjoined to commend to their use. On delivering the letters, I found I was considered as having authority to order an election—a power which was vested only in the Prefect of the District or his special agents. At the suggestion of some of the miners I went with them to the Alcalde, in order to have a consultation. I disclaimed all authority in the matter, but explained to them the mode in which the elections

were to be held on the river, and recommended them to adopt a similar action. Owing to the short time which elapsed between the Governor's proclamation and the day of election, it was impossible for the Prefect of each district to notify all the organized communities. The only plan, therefore, was to meet on the appointed day, publicly elect Judges and Inspectors, and hold the election in all other respects according to the requirements of the Constitution. This was agreed to by the law-givers of the Volcano as the most advisable mode of action. But behold how easy it is, in a primitive community like this, to obtain the popular favor! There was, on one of the tickets in the San Joaquin district, a candidate for the State Senate, whose surname was the same as mine, and the Volcanics, as I afterwards learned, took me to be the same individual. "We will vote for him," said they, "because he came here to see us, and because he appears to understand the law." Accordingly, the whole vote of the place was given to my namesake, but intended for me. Had I known this fact sooner, I might have been tempted to run for Alcalde, at least.

Major Bartlett went with us to examine the diggings. The alluvial soil of the basin contains little gold, but has been dug up very extensively by the miners, in search of the clay stratum; beside which the gold is found in coarse grains, mixed with sand and gravel. There is, however, no regularity in the stratum, everything bears marks of violent change and disruption. In holes dug side by side, I noticed that the clay would be reached eighteen inches below the surface in one, and perhaps eight feet in the other. This makes the digging something of a lottery, those who find a deposit always finding a rich one, and those who find none making nothing at all. In the gulches the yield is more certain. A Mexican had lately taken twenty-eight pounds out of

a single "pocket;" another miner, having struck a rich spot, dug \$8,000 in a few days. Many made three, four and five ounces daily for several days. In the upper valley the average was about an ounce a day. From my hasty examination of the place, I should not think the gold was thrown up by the craters in a melted state, as the miners imagine. The fact of its being found with the layer of clay would refute this idea. From the strata, water-courses, and other indications, it is nevertheless evident that large slides from the hills, occasioned by earthquakes or eruptions, have taken place.

I climbed the hills and visited two of the craters, neither of which appeared to be the main opening of the volcano. On the contrary, I should rather judge them to be vents or escape-holes for the confined flame, formed in the sides of the mountain. The rocks, by upheaval, are thrown into irregular cones, and show everywhere the marks of intense heat. Large seams, blackened by the subterranean fire, run through them, and in the highest parts are round, smooth holes, a foot in diameter, to some of which no bottom can be found. These are evidently the last flues through which the air and flame made their way, as the surface hardened over the cooling volcano. The Indian traditions go back to the time when these craters were active, but their chronology is totally indefinite, and I am not geologist enough to venture an opinion. Pines at least a century old, are now growing on the rim of the craters. Further up the mountain, the miners informed me, there are large beds of lava, surrounding craters of still larger dimensions.

We took dinner at Major Bartlett's tent, and started on our return accompanied by Dr. Carpentier, of Saratoga, N. Y. Before leaving, I took pains to learn the particulars of the recent

fight with the Indians at the Volcano. The latter, it seems first discovered the placer, and were digging when the whites arrived. They made room for them at once, and proposed that they should work peaceably together. Things went on amicably for several days, when one of the miners missed his pick. He accused the Indians of stealing it; the chief declared that if it was in their camp it should be returned, and started to make inquiries. Instead of walking he ran; upon which one of the whites raised his rifle and shot him. The Indians then armed at once. The miners called up the remaining white men from the placer, and told them that they had been attacked and one of their number killed. The consequence of this false information was a general assault upon the Indians who were at once driven off, and had not returned up to the time of my visit. The same day a man named Aldrich, from Boston, was found in the meadow on the trail by which we came, pierced with three arrows. The neighborhood of the Volcano was considered dangerous ground, and no one thought of venturing into the mountains, unless well armed. It is due to the miners to say, that on learning the true state of the quarrel, they banished the scoundrels whose heartless cruelty had placed the whole community in peril.

We retraced our steps, saw the snows of the Nevada turned by the sunset to a brighter gold than any hidden in its veins, and reached the camp of the prospectors in a starry and beautiful twilight. As we approached through the trees, in the gathering gloom, they shouted to us to keep off, taking us for Indians, but allowed us to approach, when we answered in English. We were kindly received, and again procured an excellent supper. The men were better than we imagined. They had been anxious about our safety the previous night, and fired their rifles as signals to

us. After we had grown tired of talking around the blazing camp-fire about grizzly bears, Mexicans, Gila deserts and gulches whose pockets were filled with gold, they gave us a corner in their tent and shared their blankets with us. I took their kindness as a rebuke to my former suspicions of their selfishness, and slept all the better for the happiness of being undeceived.

It was a model morning that dawned upon us. The splash of a fountain in the sun, the gloss of a white dove's wing, the winking of the beaded bubbles on Keats' cool draught of vintage, could not have added a sparkle to its brightness. The sky was as blue and keen as a Damascus blade, and the air, filled with a resinous odor of pine, cedar and wild bay, was like the intoxication of new life to the frame. We were up and off with the dawn, and walked several miles before breakfast. On reaching the foot of the Butte Dr. G. and myself determined to make the ascent. Its ramparts of red volcanic rock, bristling with chaparral, towered a thousand feet above us, seemingly near at hand in the clear air. We believed we should be the first to scale its summit. The miners do not waste time in climbing peaks, and the Indians keep aloof, with superstitious reverence, from the dwelling-places of spirits.

After a toilsome ascent, at an angle of 45° , we reached the summit. Here, where we supposed no human foot had ever been, we found on the crowning stone—the very apex of the pyramid—the letters "D. B." rudely cut with a knife. Shade of Daniel Boone! who else but thou could have been pioneer in this far corner of the Farthest West! As the buried soldier is awakened by the squadron that gallops to battle over his grave, has the tramp of innumerable trains through the long wilderness called thee forth to march in advance, and leave thy pioneer mark on every unexplored region between sea and sea?

Nevertheless we gave the name of Polo's Peak to the Butte—in honor of the dauntless old chief who presided over the country round about. Before I left the region, the name was generally adopted by the miners, and I hope future travelers will remember it. The view from the top is remarkably fine. Situated about half-way between the plain and the dividing ridge of the Sierra Nevada, the Peak overlooks the whole mountain country. The general appearance is broken and irregular, except to the east, where the ranges are higher. The mountains within ten miles of us had snow on their crests, and the Nevada—immaculate and lustrous in its hue—was not more than thirty miles distant. The courses of the Calaveras, Mokelumne and Cosumne, with the smaller creeks between them, could be distinctly traced. In the nearer region at our feet, we could see the miners at work felling logs and building their winter cabins, and hear the far whoop of Indians, from their hidden rancherias. On the west, the horizon was bounded by the Coast Range, Monte Diablo in the centre and Suisun Bay making a gap in the chain. Between that blue wall and the rough region at our feet lay the great plains of Sacramento and San Joaquin, fifty miles in breadth, and visible for at least one hundred and fifty miles of extent. The sky was perfectly clear, and this plain alone, of all the landscape, was covered with a thick white fog, the upper surface of which, as we looked down upon it, was slowly tossed to and fro, moving and shifting like the waves of an agitated sea.

We enjoyed this remarkable prospect for an hour, and then made our way down the opposite side of the Peak, following bear and deer trails through patches of thorny chapparal and long slopes of sliding stones. We tarried for Dr. Carpentier in one of the glens, eating the acorns which lay scattered under the trees

As he did not appear, however, we climbed the river hills and came down on the Upper Bar, reaching our starting-point in time for a dinner to which we did full justice.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ELECTION SCENES AND MINING CHARACTERS.

On my arrival at the Lower Bar, I found Mr. Raney, of Stockton, who had made the journey with the greatest difficulty, the roads being almost impassable. The rainy season had now fairly set in, and as it came a month earlier than usual, the miners, in most cases, were without their winter supplies. Provisions of all kinds had greatly advanced in price, and the cost of freight from Stockton ran up at once to 75 cts. per lb. Flour was sold on the river at \$1 per lb. and other articles were in the same proportion. Much anxiety was felt lest the rains should not abate in which case there would have been a great deal of suffering on all the rivers.

The clouds gradually lowered and settled down on the topmost pines. Towards evening a chill rain came on, and the many gullies on the hill-sides were filled with brown torrents that brawled noisily on their way to the swollen Mokelumne. The big drops splashed dismally on our tent, as we sat within, but a double cover kept us completely dry and the ditch dug inside the pins turned off the streams that poured down its sides. During the night, however, the wind blew violently down the ravines, and

the skirts of our blankets nearest the side of the tent were thoroughly soaked. My boots stood under a leaky part of the canvas, and as I hastened to put them on next morning, without examination, I thrust my foot into about three inches of water.

The Election Day dawned wet and cheerlessly. From the folds of our canvas door, we looked out on the soaked and trickling hills and the sodden, dripping tents. Few people were stirring about the place, and they wore such a forlorn look that all idea of getting up a special enthusiasm was at once abandoned. There was no motion made in the matter until towards noon, as the most of the miners lay dozing in their tents. The Alcalde acted as Judge, which was the first step; next there were two Inspectors to be appointed. I was requested to act as one, but, although I had been long enough in the country to have held the office, I declined to accept until after application had been made to some of the inhabitants. The acquiescence of two of the resident traders relieved me of the responsibility. The election was held in the largest tent in the place, the Inspectors being seated behind the counter, in close proximity to the glasses and bottles, the calls for which were quite as frequent as the votes. I occupied a seat next the Alcalde, on a rough couch covered with an India-rubber blanket, where I passed the day in looking on the election and studying the singular characters present.

As there were two or three candidates for State offices in the place, the drumming up of voters gave one a refreshing reminiscence of home. The choosing of candidates from lists, nearly all of whom were entirely unknown, was very amusing. Names, in many instances, were made to stand for principles; accordingly, a Mr. Fair got many votes. One of the candidates, who had been on the river a few days previous, wearing a high-crowned silk hat,

with narrow brim, lost about twenty votes on that account. Some went no further than to vote for those they actually knew. One who took the opposite extreme, justified himself in this wise:—"When I left home," said he, "I was determined to *go it blind* I went it blind in coming to California, and I'm not going to stop now. I voted for the Constitution, and I've never seen the Constitution I voted for all the candidates, and I don't know a damned one of them. I'm going it blind all through, I am." The Californians and resident Mexicans who were entitled to vote, were in high spirits, on exercising the privilege for the first time in their lives. It made no difference what the ticket was; the fact of their having voted very much increased their self-importance. for the day at least.

The votes polled amounted to one hundred and five, all of which were "For the Constitution." The number of miners on the Bar, who were entitled to vote, was probably double this number, but those who were at work up among the gulches remained in their tents, on account of the rain. A company on the other side of the river was completely cut off from the polls by the rise of the flood, which made it impossible for them to cross. The Inspectors were puzzled at first how far to extend the privilege of suffrage to the Mexicans. There was no copy of the Treaty of Queretaro to be had, and the exact wording of the clause referring to this subject was not remembered. It was at last decided, however, that those who had been residing in the country since the conquest, and intended to remain permanently, might be admitted to vote; and the question was therefore put to each one in turn. The most of them answered readily in the affirmative, and seemed delighted to be considered as citizens. "*Como no?*" said a fat good-humored fellow, with a ruddy olive face, as he gave his

take a new twirl over his shoulder : “ *Como no? soy Americano ahora.*” (Why not? I am now an American.) The candidates, whose interest it was to search out all delinquents, finally exhausted the roll, and the polls were closed. The returns were made out in due form, signed and dispatched by a messenger to the Double Spring, to await the carrier from the Upper Bar, who was to convey them to Stockton.

During the few days I spent on the Mokelumne, I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with many curious characteristics and incidents of mining life. It would have been an interesting study for a philosopher, to note the different effects which sudden enrichment produced upon different persons, especially those whose lives had previously been passed in the midst of poverty and privation. The most profound scholar in human nature might here have learned something which all his previous wisdom and experience could never teach. It was not precisely the development of new qualities in the man, but the exhibition of changes and contrasts of character, unexpected and almost unaccountable. The world-old moral of gold was completely falsified. Those who were unused to labor, whose daily ounce or two seemed a poor recompense for weary muscles and flagging spirits, might carefully hoard their gains; but they whose hardy fibre grappled with the tough earth as naturally as if it knew no fitter play, and made the coarse gravel and rocky strata yield up their precious grains, were as profuse as princes and as open-hearted as philanthropists. Weather-beaten tars, wiry, delving Irishmen, and stalwart foresters from the wilds of Missouri, became a race of sybarites and epicureans. Secure in possessing the “Open Sesamé” to the exhaustless treasury under their feet, they gave free rein to every whim or impulse which could possibly be gratified.

It was no unusual thing to see a company of these men, who had never before had a thought of luxury beyond a good beef-steak and a glass of whiskey, drinking their champagne at ten dollars a bottle, and eating their tongue and sardines, or warming in the smoky camp-kettle their tin canisters of turtle-soup and lobster-salad. It was frequently remarked that the Oregonians, though accustomed all their lives to the most simple, solid and temperate fare, went beyond every other class of miners in their fondness for champagne and all kinds of cordials and choice liquors. These were the only luxuries they indulged in, for they were, to a man, cautious and economical in the use of gold.

One of the most amusing cases I saw was that of a company of Englishmen, from New South Wales, who had been on the Moke-lumne about a week at the time of my visit. They had only landed in California two weeks previous, and this was their first experience of gold-digging. One of them, a tall, strong-limbed fellow, who had served seven years as a private of cavalry, was unceasing in his exclamations of wonder and delight. He repeated his story from morning till night, and in the fullness of his heart communicated it to every new face he saw. "By me soul, but this is a great country!" he would exclaim; "here a man can dig up as much goold in a day as he ever saw in all his life. Hav'n't I got already more than I know what to do with, an' I've only been here a week. An' to think 'at I come here with never a single bloody farthing in my pocket! An' the Frenchman, down the hill there, him 'at sells wittles, he wouldn't trust me for a piece of bread, the devil take him! 'If ye 've no money, go an' dig some;' says he; 'people dig here o' Sundays all the same.' 'Ill dig o' Sundays for no man, ye bloody villain;' says I, 'I'll starve first.' An' I did'nt, an' I had a hungry belly, too. But o

Monday I dug nineteen dollars, an' o' Tuesday twenty-three, an' o' Friday two hundred an' eighty-two dollars in one lump as big as yer fist ; an' all for not workin' o' Sundays. Was there ever sich a country in the world !” And, as if to convince himself that he actually possessed all this gold, he bought champagne, ale and brandy by the dozen bottles, and insisted on supplying every body in the settlement.

There was one character on the river, whom I had met on my first visit in August and still found there on my return. He possessed sufficient individuality of appearance and habits to have made him a hero of fiction ; Cooper would have delighted to have stumbled upon him. His real name I never learned, but he was known to all the miners by the cognomen of “ Buckshot ”—an appellation which seemed to suit his hard, squab figure very well. He might have been forty years of age or perhaps fifty ; his face was but slightly wrinkled, and he wore a heavy black beard which grew nearly to his eyes and entirely concealed his mouth. When he removed his worn and dusty felt hat, which was but seldom, his large, square forehead, bald crown and serious gray eyes gave him an appearance of reflective intellect ;—a promise hardly verified by his conversation. He was of a stout and sturdy frame, and always wore clothes of a coarse texture, with a flannel shirt and belt containing a knife. I guessed from a slight peculiarity of his accent that he was a German by birth, though I believe he was not considered so by the miners.

The habits of “ Buckshot ” were still more eccentric than his appearance. He lived entirely alone, in a small tent, and seemed rather to shun than court the society of others. His tastes were exceedingly luxurious ; he always had the best of everything in the market, regardless of its cost. The finest hams, at a dollar

and a half the pound ; preserved oysters, corn and peas, at six dollars a canister ; onions and potatoes, whenever such articles made their appearance ; Chinese sweetmeats and dried fruits, were all on his table, and his dinner was regularly moistened by a bottle of champagne. He did his own cooking, an operation which cost little trouble, on account of the scarcity of fresh provisions. When particularly lucky in digging, he would take his ease for a day or two, until the dust was exhausted, when he would again shoulder his pick and crowbar and commence burrowing in some lonely corner of the rich gulch. He had been in the country since the first discovery of the placers, and was reported to have dug, in all, between thirty and forty thousand dollars,—all of which he had spent for his subsistence. I heard him once say that he never dug less than an ounce in one day, and sometimes as much as two pounds. The rough life of the mountains seemed entirely congenial to his tastes, and he could not have been induced to change it for any other, though less laborious and equally epicurean.

Among the number of miners scattered through the different gulches, I met daily with men of education and intelligence, from all parts of the United States. It was never safe to presume on a person's character, from his dress or appearance. A rough, dirty, sunburnt fellow, with unshorn beard, quarrying away for life at the bottom of some rocky hole, might be a graduate of one of the first colleges in the country, and a man of genuine refinement and taste. I found plenty of men who were not outwardly distinguishable from the inveterate trapper or mountaineer, but who, a year before, had been patientless physicians, briefless lawyers and half-starved editors. It was this infusion of intelligence which gave the gold hunting communities notwithstanding their barbaric exterior and

mode of life, an order and individual security which at first sight seemed little less than marvellous.

Since my first visit, the use of quicksilver had been introduced on the river, and the success which attended its application to gold-washing will bring it henceforth into general use. An improved rocker, having three or four lateral gutters in its bottom which were filled with quicksilver, took up the gold so perfectly, that not the slightest trace of it could be discovered in the refuse earth. The black sand, which was formerly rejected, was washed in a bowl containing a little quicksilver in the bottom, and the amalgam formed by the gold yielded four dollars to every pound of sand. Mr. James, who had washed out a great deal of this sand, evaporated the quicksilver in a retort, and produced a cake of fine gold worth nearly five hundred dollars. The machines sold at one thousand dollars apiece, the owners having wisely taken the precaution to have them patented.

There is no doubt that, by means of quicksilver, much of the soil which has heretofore been passed by as worthless, will give a rich return. The day before my departure, Dr. Gillette washed out several panfuls of earth from the very top of the hills, and found it to contain abundance of fine grains of gold. A heap of refuse earth, left by the common rocker after ten thousand dollars had been washed, yielded still another thousand to the new machine. Quicksilver was enormously high, four dollars a pound having been paid in Stockton. When the mines of Santa Clara shall be in operation, the price will be so much reduced that its use will become universal and the annual golden harvest be thereby greatly increased. It will be many years before all the placers or gold deposits are touched, no matter how large the emigration to California may be. The region in which all the mining operations

are now carried on, extending from the base of the proper Sierra Nevada to the plains of Sacramento and San Joaquin, is upwards of five hundred miles in length by fifty in breadth. Towards the head of the Sacramento River gold is also found in the granite formation, and there is every reason to believe that it exists in the valleys and cañons of the great snowy ridge.

I was strongly tempted to take hold of the pick and pan, and try my luck in the gulches for a week or two. I had fully intended, on reaching California, to have personally tested the pleasure of gold-digging, as much for the sake of a thorough experience of life among the placers as from a sly hope of striking on a pocket full of big lumps. The unexpected coming-on of the rainy season, made my time of too much account, besides adding greatly to the hardships of the business. Two or three days' practice is requisite to handle the implements properly, and I had no notion of learning the manipulations without fingering the gold. Once, indeed, I took a butcher-knife, went into one of the forsaken holes in the big gulch, lay on my back as I had seen the other miners do, and endeavored to pick out some yellow grains from the crevices of the crumbling rock. My search was vain, however, and I was indebted to the kindness of some friends for the only specimens I brought away from the Diggings.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RAINY SEASON.

I LEFT the Mokelumne River the afternoon following Election Day, and retraced my path to Jackson's Creek, which I reached at dark. Being unhorsed, I resumed my old plodding gait, "packing" my blankets and spurs. I was obliged to walk to the Upper Bar, in order to cross the Mokelumne, whose current was now very deep and rapid. A man named Bills, who kept a brush hotel with a canvas roof, had set up an impromptu ferry, made by nailing a few planks upon four empty barrels, lashed together. This clumsy float was put over by means of a rope stretched from bank to bank. The tendency of the barrels to roll in the swift current, made it very insecure for more than two persons. The same morning, four men who were crossing at once, overbore its delicate equilibrium and were tipped into the water, whence they were rescued with some difficulty. A load of freight met with the same luck just before I reached the ferry. The banks were heaped with barrels, trunks, crates of onions and boxes of liquor, waiting to be taken over, and some of the Mexican arrieros were endeavoring to push their pack-mules into the water and force them to swim. I took my place on the unsteady platform with some doubts of a dry skin, but as we were all careful to keep a plumb line, the passage was made in safety.

I toiled up the windings of a deep gulch, whose loneliness, after I had passed the winter huts of the gold-diggers, was made very impressive by the gathering twilight. The gray rocks which walled it in towards the summit looked dim and spectral under the eaves of the pines, and a stream of turbid water splashed with a melancholy sound into the chasm below. The transparent glimmer of the lighted tents on Jackson's Creek had a cheery look as seen at the bottom of the gulch on the other side of the mountain. I stopped at Cosgrove's tent, where several travelers who had arrived before me were awaiting supper. We sat about the fire and talked of gold-digging, the election and the prospect of supplies for the winter. When Mrs. Cosgrove had finished frying her beef and boiling her coffee, we rolled to the table all the casks, boxes and logs we could find, and sat down to our meal under the open stars. A Chinook Indian from Oregon acted as waiter—an attendance which we would rather have dispensed with. I was offered a raw-hide in one corner of a small storage-tent, and spread my blanket upon it; the dampness of the earth, however, striking through both hide and blankets, gave me several chills and rheumatic pains of the joints, before morning. The little community established on the knoll numbered about sixty persons. They were all settled there for the winter, though the gold dug did not average more than half an ounce to each man, daily.

Next morning, I crossed the hills to Sutter's Creek, where I found the settlement increased by several new arrivals. From this place my path branched off to the north, crossing several mountain ridges to Amador's Creek, which, like the streams I had already passed, was lined with tents and winter cabins. I questioned several miners about their profits, but could get no satisfactory answer. Singularly enough, it is almost impossible to learn

from the miners themselves, unless one happens to be a near acquaintance, the amount of their gains. If unlucky, they dislike to confess it; if the contrary, they have good reason for keeping it secret. When most complaining, they may be most successful. I heard of one, who, after digging fruitlessly for a week, came suddenly on a pocket, containing about three hundred dollars. Seeing a friend approaching, he hastily filled it up with stones, and began grubbing in the top soil. "Well, what luck?" inquired his friend. "Not a damned cent," was the answer, given with a mock despondency, while the pale face and stammering voice betrayed the cheat at once. Nobody believes you are not a gold-hunter. He must be a fool, they think, who would go to the mountains for any other purpose. The questions invariably asked me were: "Where have you been digging?" and "Where do you winter?" If I spoke of going home soon, the expression was: "Well, I s'pose you've got your pile;" or, "You've been lucky in your prospecting, to get off so soon."

Leaving Amador's Creek, a walk of seven miles took me to Dry Creek, where I found a population of from two to three hundred, established for the winter. The village was laid out with some regularity, and had taverns, stores, butchers' shops and monte tables. The digging was going on briskly, and averaged a good return. The best I could hear of, was \$114 in two days, contrasted with which were the stories of several who had got nothing but the fever and ague for their pains. The amount of sickness on these small rivers during the season had been very great, and but a small part of it, in my opinion, was to be ascribed to excesses of any kind. All new countries, it is well known, breed fever and ague, and this was especially the case in the gold region, where, before the rains came on, the miner was exposed

to intense heat during the day and was frequently cold under double blankets at night. The water of many of the rivers occasions diarrhoea to those who drink it, and scarcely one out of a hundred emigrants escapes an attack of this complaint.

At all these winter settlements, however small, an alcalde is chosen and regulations established, as near as possible in accordance with the existing laws of the country. Although the authority exercised by the alcalde is sometimes nearly absolute, the miners invariably respect and uphold it. Thus, at whatever cost, order and security are preserved ; and when the State organization shall have been completed, the mining communities, for an extent of five hundred miles, will, by a quiet and easy process, pass into regularly constituted towns, and enjoy as good government and protection as any other part of the State. Nothing in California seemed more miraculous to me than this spontaneous evolution of social order from the worst elements of anarchy. It was a lesson worth even more than the gold.

The settlement on Dry Creek is just on the skirts of the rough mountain region—the country of cañons, gulches, cañadas and divides ; terms as familiar in the diggings as “ per cent ” in Wall-street. I had intended to strike directly across the mountains to the American Fork. The people represented this route to be impracticable, and the jagged ridges, ramparted with rock, which towered up in that direction, seemed to verify the story, so I took the trail for Daly’s Rancho, twenty-two miles distant. After passing the Willow Springs, a log hut on the edge of a swamp, the road descended to the lower hills, where it was crossed by frequent streams. I passed on the way a group of Indians who were skinning a horse they had killed and were about to roast. They were well armed and had probably shot the horse while it was

grazing. I greeted them with a "buenas dias," which they suddenly returned, adding an "ugh : ugh !" which might have expressed either contempt, admiration, friendship or fear.

In traveling through these low hills, I passed several companies of miners who were engaged in erecting log huts for the winter. The gravelly bottoms in many places showed traces of their prospecting, and the rocker was in operation where there was sufficient water. When I inquired the yield of gold I could get no satisfactory answer, but the faces of the men betrayed no sign of disappointment. While resting under a leafless oak, I was joined by a boy of nineteen who had been digging on the Dry Creek and was now returning to San Francisco, ague-stricken and penniless. We walked on in company for several hours, under a dull gray sky, which momentarily threatened rain. The hot flush of fever was on his face, and he seemed utterly desponding and disinclined to talk. Towards night, when the sky had grown darker, he declared himself unable to go further, but I encouraged him to keep on until we reached a cabin, where the miners kindly received him for the night.

I met on the road many emigrant wagons, bound for the diggings. They traveled in companies of two and three, joining teams whenever their wagons stuck fast in the mire. Some were obliged to unload at the toughest places, and leave part of their stores on the Plain until they could return from their Winter quarters. Their noon camps would be veritable treasures for my friend Darley, the artist, if he could have seen them. The men were all gaunt, long-limbed Rip Van Winkles, with brown faces, matted hair and beards, and garments which seemed to have grown up with them, for you could not believe they had ever been taken off. The women, who were somewhat more tidy, had suf

fered less from the journey, but there were still many fine subjects for the pencil among them. In the course of the day I passed about thirty teams.

At night, after a toilsome journey, I reached the Cosunne River, two miles below the diggings. I was wet from the swamps I crossed and the pools I had waded, weary in body, and thoroughly convinced of the impossibility of traveling on the Plains during the rainy season. One would think, from the parched and seamed appearance of the soil in summer, that nothing short of an absolute deluge could restore the usual moisture. A single rain, however, fills up the cracks, and a week of wet weather turns the dusty plain into a deep mire, the hollows into pools, and the stony arroyos into roaring streams. The roads then become impassable for wagons, killing to mules, and terribly laborious for pedestrians. In the loose, gravelly soil on the hill-tops, a horse at once sinks above his knees, and the only chance of travel is by taking the clayey bottoms. Where, a month before there had been a *jornada* of twenty miles, arid as the desert, my path was now crossed by fifty streams.

Where the trail struck the river I came upon a small tent, pitched by the roadside, and was hailed by the occupants. They were two young men from Boston, who came out in the summer, went to the North-Fork of the American, prospered in their digging, and were going southward to spend the winter. They were good specimens of the sober, hardy, persevering gold-digger—a class who never fail to make their “piles.” I willingly accepted their invitation to spend the night, whereupon they threw another log on the camp-fire, mixed some batter for slap-jacks, and put a piece of salt pork in the pan. We did not remain long about the fire, after my supper was finished. Uniting our store of

blankets, we made a bed in common for all three, entirely filling the space covered by the little tent. Two or three showers fell during the night, and the dash of rain on the canvas, so near my head, made doubly grateful the warmth and snugness of our covert.

The morning brought another rain, and the roads grew deeper and tougher. At Coates's Ranche, two miles further, I was ferried across the Cosumne in a canoe. The river was falling, and teams could barely pass. The day previous a wagon and team had been washed several hundred yards down the stream, and the owners were still endeavoring to recover the running works which lay in a deep hole. Several emigrant companies were camped on the grassy bottoms along the river, waiting a chance to cross. At the ranche I found breakfast just on the table, and to be had at the usual price of a dollar and a half; the fare consisted of beef broiled in the fire, coarse bread, frijoles and coffee. The landlady was a German emigrant, but had been so long among the American settlers and native rancheros, that her talk was a three-stranded twist of the different languages. She seemed quite unconscious that she was not talking in a single tongue, for all three came to serve her thought with equal readiness.

I stood in the door some time, deliberating what to do. The sky had closed in upon the plain with a cheerless drizzle, which made walking very uncomfortable, and I could find no promise of a favorable change of weather. My intention had been to visit Mormon Island and afterwards Culloma Mill, on the American Fork. The former place was about thirty miles distant, but the trail was faint and difficult to find; while, should the rain increase, I could not hope to make the journey in one day. The walk to Sacramento presented an equally dispiriting aspect, but after some

questioning and deliberation, I thought it possible that General Morse might have left my gray mare at some of the ranches further down the river, and resolved to settle the question before going further. Within the space of two or three miles I visited three, and came at last to a saw-mill, beyond which there was no habitation for ten miles. The family in an adjoining house seemed little disposed to make my acquaintance; I therefore took shelter from the rain, which was now pouring fast, in a mud cabin, on the floor of which lay two or three indolent vaqueros. They were acquainted with every animal on all the ranches, and unhesitatingly declared that my mare was not among them.

When the rain slacked, I walked back to one of the other ranches, where I found several miners who had taken shelter in a new adobe house, which was partially thatched. We gathered together in a room, the floor of which was covered with wet tulé and endeavored to keep ourselves warm. The place was so chill that I went into the house inhabited by the family, and asked permission to dry myself at the fire. The occupants were two women, apparently sisters, of the ages of eighteen and thirty; the younger would have been handsome, but for an expression of habitual discontent and general contempt of everything. They made no answer to my request, so I took a chair and sat down near the blaze. Two female tongues, however, cannot long keep silent, and presently the elder launched into a violent anathema against all *emigrants*, as she called them. I soon learned that she had been in the country three years; that she had at first been living on Bear Creek; that the overland emigrants, the previous year having come into the country almost destitute, appropriated some of the supplies which had been left at home while the family was absent gold-hunting; and, finally, that the fear of being in future

plundered of their cattle and wheat had driven them to the banks of the Cosumne, where they had hoped for some security. They were deceived, however ; the *emigrants* troubled them worse than ever, and though they charged a dollar and a half a meal and sometimes cleared fifty dollars a day, still their hatred was not abated.

Most especially did the elder express her resentment against the said *emigrants*, on account of their treatment of the Indians. I felt disposed at first to agree with her wholly in their condemnation, but it appeared that she was influenced by other motives than those of humanity. "Afore these here *emigrants* come," said she ; "the Injuns were as well-behaved and bidable as could be ; I liked 'em more 'n the whites. When we begun to find gold on the Yuber, we could git 'em to work for us day in and day out fur next to nothin'. We told 'em the gold was stuff to whitewash houses with, and give 'em a hankecher for a tin-cup full ; but after the *emigrants* begun to come along and put all sorts of notions into their heads, there was no gettin' them to do nothin'."

I took advantage of a break in this streak of "chain lightning," to inquire whether Dr. Gwin and Gen. Morse had recently passed that way ; but they did not know them by name. "Well," said I, "the gentlemen who are trying to get elected." "Yes," rejoined the elder, "*them* people *was* here. They stuck their heads in the door one night and asked if they might have supper and lodgin' I told 'em no, I guessed they couldn't. Jist then Mr. Kewen come along ; he know'd 'em and made 'em acquainted. Gosh ! but I was mad. I *had* to git supper for 'em *then* ; but if 't'd 'a bin *me*, I'd 'a had more spunk than to eat, after I'd bin told I could'n't." It had been difficult for me to keep a serious countenance before, but now I burst into a hearty laugh, which

they took as a compliment to their "spunk." One of the household, a man of some education, questioned me as to the object of my emigration to California, which I explained without reserve. This, however, brought on another violent expression of opinion from the same female. "That's jist the way," said she; "*some* people come here, think they've done great things, and go home and publish all sorts of lies; but they don't know no more'n nothin' in God A'mighty's world, as much as *them* people that's bin here three years." After this declaration I thought it best to retreat to the half-finished adobe house, and remain with my companions in misery. Towards evening we borrowed an axe, with which we procured fuel enough for the night, and built a good fire. A Mexican, driven in by the rain, took out his cards and set up a monte bank of ten dollars, at which the others played with shillings and quarters. I tried to read an odd volume of the "Scottish Chiefs," which I found in the house, but the old charm was gone, and I wondered at the childish taste which was so fascinated with its pages.

We slept together on the earthen floor. All night the rain pattered on the *tulé* thatch, but at sunrise it ceased. The sky was still lowering, and the roads were growing worse so rapidly, that instead of starting across the plains for Mormon Island, the nearest point on the American Fork where the miners were at work, I turned about for Sacramento City, thinking it best to return while there was a chance. A little experience of travel over the saturated soil soon convinced me that my tour in the mountains was over. I could easily relinquish my anticipations of a visit to the mining regions of the American Fork, Bear and Yuba Rivers, for life at the different diggings is very much the same, and the character of the gold deposits does not materially vary; but there

had ever been a shining point in the background of all my former dreams of California—a shadowy object to be attained, of which I had never lost sight during my wanderings and from which I could not turn away without a pang of regret and disappointment. This was, a journey to the head of the Sacramento Valley, a sight of the stupendous Shaste Peak, which stands like an obelisk of granite capped with gleaming marble, on the borders of Oregon, and perhaps an exploration of the terrific cañons through which the river plunges in a twenty-mile cataract, from the upper shelf of the mountains. The fragments of description which I had gathered from Oregonians, emigrants and “prospectors” who had visited that region, only made my anticipations more glowing and my purpose more fixed. I knew there was grandeur there, though there might not be gold. Three weeks of rough travel, had the dry season extended to its usual length, would have enabled me to make the journey; but, like most of the splendid plans we build for ourselves, I was obliged to give it up on the eve of fulfilment. A few days of rain completely washed it out of my imagination, and it was long before I could fill the blank.

I was accompanied by one of the “Iowa Rangers,” from Dubuque, Iowa. He had been at work at the Dry Diggings on Weaver’s Creek. He was just recovering from the scurvy, and could not travel fast, but was an excellent hand at wading. Before reaching the timber of the American Fork, we crossed thirty or forty streams, many of which were knee-deep. Where they were so wide as to render a leap impossible, my plan was to dash through at full speed, and I generally got over with but a partial saturation: the broad, shallow pools obliged us to stop and pull off our boots. It was one form of the water-cure I did not relish. “If

this be traveling in the rainy season," thought I, "I'll have none of it."

On the banks of the American Fork we found a sandy soil and made better progress. Following that beautiful stream through the afternoon, we came at dusk to Sutter's Fort, which was surrounded by a moat of deep mud. I picked my way in the dark to Sacramento City, but was several times lost in its tented labyrinth before I reached Capt. Baker's store—under whose hospitable roof I laid down my pack and took up my abode for several days.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NIGHT IN SACRAMENTO CITY.

SACRAMENTO CITY was one place by day and another by night, and of the two, its night-side was the most peculiar. As the day went down dull and cloudy, a thin fog gathered in the humid atmosphere, through which the canvas houses, lighted from within, shone with a broad, obscure gleam, that confused the eye and made the streets most familiar by daylight look strangely different. They bore no resemblance to the same places, seen at mid-day, under a break of clear sunshine, and pervaded with the stir of business life. The town, regular as it was, became a bewildering labyrinth of half-light and deep darkness, and the perils of traversing it were greatly increased by the mire and frequent pools left by the rain.

To one, venturing out after dark for the first time, these perils were by no means imaginary. Each man wore boots reaching to the knees—or higher, if he could get them—with the pantaloons tucked inside, but there were pit-falls, into which had he fallen, even these would have availed little. In the more frequented streets, where drinking and gambling had full swing, there was a partial light, streaming out through doors and crimson window-curtains, to guide his steps. Sometimes a platform of plank re-

ceived his feet ; sometimes he skipped from one loose barrel-stave to another, laid with the convex-side upward ; and sometimes, deceived by a scanty piece of scantling, he walked off its further end into a puddle of liquid mud. Now, floundering in the stiff mire of the mid-street, he plunged down into a gulley and was "brought up" by a pool of water ; now, venturing near the houses a scaffold-pole or stray beam dealt him an unexpected blow. If he wandered into the outskirts of the town, where the tent-city of the emigrants was built, his case was still worse. The briery thickets of the original forest had not been cleared away, and the stumps, trunks and branches of felled trees were distributed over the soil with delightful uncertainty. If he escaped these, the lariats of picketed mules spread their toils for his feet, threatening entanglement and a kick from one of the vicious animals ; tent-ropes and pins took him across the shins, and the horned heads of cattle, left where they were slaughtered, lay ready to gore him at every step. A walk of any distance, environed by such dangers, especially when the air was damp and chill, and there was a possibility of rain at any moment, presented no attractions to the weary denizens of the place.

A great part of them, indeed, took to their blankets soon after dark. They were generally worn out with the many excitements of the day, and glad to find a position of repose. Reading was out of the question to the most of them when candles were \$4 per lb. and scarce at that ; but in any case, the preternatural activity and employment of mind induced by the business habits of the place would have made impossible anything like quiet thought. I saw many persons who had brought the works of favorite authors with them, for recreation at odd hours, but of all the works thus brought, I never saw one read. Men preferred—or rather it grew,

involuntarily, into a custom—to lie at ease instead, and turn over in the brain all their shifts and manœuvres of speculation, to see whether any chance had been left untouched. Some, grouped around a little pocket-stove, beguile an hour or two over their cans of steaming punch or other warming concoction, and build schemes out of the smoke of their rank Guayaquil *puros*—for the odor of a genuine Havana is unknown. But, by nine o'clock at farthest, nearly all the working population of Sacramento City are stretched out on mattress, plank or cold earth, according to the state of their fortunes, and dreaming of splendid runs of luck or listening to the sough of the wind in the trees.

There is, however, a large floating community of overland emigrants, miners and sporting characters, who prolong the wakefulness of the streets far into the night. The door of many a gambling-hell on the levee, and in J and K streets, stands invitingly open; the wail of torture from innumerable musical instruments peals from all quarters through the fog and darkness. Full bands, each playing different tunes discordantly, are stationed in front of the principal establishments, and as these happen to be near together, the mingling of the sounds in one horrid, ear-splitting, brazen chaos, would drive frantic a man of delicate nerve. All one's old acquaintances in the amateur-music line, seem to have followed him. The gentleman who played the flute in the next room to yours, at home, has been hired at an ounce a night to perform in the drinking-tent across the way; the very French horn whose lamentations used to awake you dismally from the first sweet snooze, now greets you at some corner; and all the squeaking violins, grumbling violincellos and rowdy trumpets which have severally plagued you in other times, are congregated here, in loving proximity. The very strength, loudness and confusion of

the noises, which, heard at a little distance, have the effect of one great scattering performance, marvellously takes the fancy of the rough mountain men.

Some of the establishments have small companies of Ethiopian melodists, who nightly call upon "Susanna!" and entreat to be carried back to Old Virginny. These songs are universally popular, and the crowd of listeners is often so great as to embarrass the player at the monte tables and injure the business of the gamblers. I confess to a strong liking for the Ethiopian airs, and used to spend half an hour every night in listening to them and watching the curious expressions of satisfaction and delight in the faces of the overland emigrants, who always attended in a body. The spirit of the music was always encouraging; even its most doleful passages had a grotesque touch of cheerfulness—a mingling of sincere pathos and whimsical consolation, which somehow took hold of all moods in which it might be heard, raising them to the same notch of careless good-humor. The Ethiopian melodies well deserve to be called, as they are in fact, the national airs of America. Their quaint, mock-sentimental cadences, so well suited to the broad absurdity of the words—their reckless gaiety and irreverent familiarity with serious subjects—and their spirit of antagonism and perseverance—are true expressions of the more popular sides of the national character. They follow the American race in all its emigrations, colonizations and conquests, as certainly as the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving Day. The penniless and half-despairing emigrant is stimulated to try again by the sound of "It'll never do to give it up so!" and feels a pang of home-sickness at the burthen of the "Old Virginia Shore."

At the time of which I am writing, Sacramento City boasted the only theatre in California. Its performances, three times a

week, were attended by crowds of the miners, and the owners realized a very handsome profit. The canvas building used for this purpose fronted on the levee, within a door or two of the City Hotel; it would have been taken for an ordinary drinking-house but for the sign: "EAGLE THEATRE," which was nailed to the top of the canvas frame. Passing through the bar-room we arrive at the entrance; the prices of admission are: Box, \$3; Pit, \$2. The spectators are dressed in heavy overcoats and felt hats, with boots reaching to the knees. The box-tier is a single rough gallery at one end, capable of containing about a hundred persons; the pit will probably hold three hundred more, so that the receipts of a full house amount to \$900. The sides and roof of the theatre are canvas, which, when wet, effectually prevents ventilation, and renders the atmosphere hot and stifling. The drop-curtain, which is down at present, exhibits a glaring landscape, with dark-brown trees in the foreground, and lilac-colored mountains against a yellow sky.

The overture commences; the orchestra is composed of only five members, under the direction of an Italian, and performs with tolerable correctness. The piece for the night is "The Spectre of the Forest," in which the celebrated actress, Mrs. Ray, "of the Royal Theatre, New Zealand," will appear. The bell rings; the curtain rolls up; and we look upon a forest scene, in the midst of which appears Hildebrand, the robber, in a sky-blue mantle. The foliage of the forest is of a dark-red color, which makes a great impression on the spectators and prepares them for the bloody scenes that are to follow. The other characters are a brave knight in a purple dress, with his servant in scarlet, they are about to storm the robber's hold and carry off a captive maiden. Several acts are filled with the usual amount of fighting and ter

rible speeches ; but the interest of the play is carried to an awful height by the appearance of two spectres, clad in mutilated tent-covers, and holding spermaceti candles in their hands. At this juncture Mrs. Ray rushes in and throws herself into an attitude in the middle of the stage : why she does it, no one can tell. This movement, which she repeats several times in the course of the first three acts, has no connection with the tragedy ; it is evidently introduced for the purpose of showing the audience that there is, actually, a female performer. The miners, to whom the sight of a woman is not a frequent occurrence, are delighted with these passages and applaud vehemently.

In the closing scenes, where Hildebrand entreats the heroine to become his bride, Mrs. Ray shone in all her glory. " No ! " said she, " I'd rather take a basilisk and wrap its cold fangs around me, than be clasped in the embraces of an ' artless robber. " Then, changing her tone to that of entreaty, she calls upon the knight in purple, whom she declares to be " me ' ope—me only ' ope ! " We will not stay to hear the songs and duetts which follow ; the tragedy has been a sufficient infliction. For her " ' art-rending " personations, Mrs. Ray received \$200 a week, and the wages of the other actors were in the same proportion. A musical gentleman was paid \$96 for singing " The Sea ! the Sea ! " in a deep bass voice. The usual sum paid musicians was \$16 a night. A Swiss organ-girl, by playing in the various hells, accumulated \$4000 in the course of five or six months.

The southern part of Sacramento City, where the most of the overland emigrants had located themselves, was an interesting place for a night-ramble, when one had courage to undertake threading the thickets among which their tents were pitched. There, on fallen logs about their camp-fires, might be seen groups that had

journeyed together across the Continent, recalling the hardships and perils of the travel. The men, with their long beards, weather-beaten faces and ragged garments, seen in the red, flickering light of the fires, made wild and fantastic pictures. Sometimes four of them might be seen about a stump, intent on reviving their ancient knowledge of "poker," and occasionally a more social group, filling their tin cups from a kettle of tea or something stronger. Their fires, however, were soon left to smoulder away; the evenings were too raw and they were too weary with the day's troubles to keep long vigils.

Often, too, without playing the eavesdropper, one might mingle unseen with a great many of their companies gathered together inside the tents. The thin, transparent canvas revealed the shadows of their forms, and was no impediment to the sound of their voices; besides, as they generally spoke in a bold, hearty tone, every word could be overheard at twenty yards' distance. The fragments of conversation which were caught in walking through this part of the city made a strange but most interesting medley. There were narratives of old experience on the Plains, notes about the passage of the mountains compared; reminiscences of the Salt Lake City and its strange enthusiasts; sufferings at the sink of Humboldt's River and in the Salt Desert recalled, and opinions of California in general, given in a general manner. The conversation, however, was sure to wind up with a talk about home—a lamentation for its missed comforts and frequently a regret at having forsaken them. The subject was inexhaustible, and when once they commenced calling up the scenes and incidents of their life in the Atlantic or Mississippi world, everything else was forgotten. At such times, and hearing snatches of these conversations, I too was carried home by an irresistible longing

and went back to my blankets and dreams of grizzly bear, discouraged and dissatisfied

Before I left the place, the number of emigrants settled there for the winter amounted to two or three thousand. They were all located on the vacant lots, which had been surveyed by the original owners of the town and were by them sold to others. The emigrants, who supposed that the land belonged of right to the United States, boldly declared their intention of retaining possession of it. Each man voted himself a lot, defying the threats and remonstrances of the rightful owners. The town was greatly agitated for a time by these disputes; meetings were held by both parties, and the spirit of hostility ran to a high pitch. At the time of my leaving the country, the matter was still unsettled, but the flood which occurred soon after, by sweeping both squatters and speculators off the ground, balanced accounts for awhile and left the field clear for a new start.

In the gambling-hells, under the excitement of liquor and play, a fight was no unusual occurrence. More than once, while walking in the streets at a late hour, I heard the report of a pistol; once, indeed, I came near witnessing a horrid affray, in which one of the parties was so much injured that he lay for many days blind, and at the point of death. I was within a few steps of the door, and heard the firing in time to retreat. The punishment for these quarrels, when inflicted—which was very rarely done—was not so prompt and terrible as for theft; but, to give the gambling community their due, their conduct was much more orderly and respectable than it is wont to be in other countries. This, however, was not so much a merit of their own possessing, as the effect of a strong public sentiment in favor of preserving order.

I must not omit to mention the fate of my old gray mare, who

would have served me faithfully, had she been less lazy and better provided with forage. On reaching Sacramento City I found that Gen. Morse had been keeping her for me at a livery stable, at a cost of \$5 a day. She looked in much better spirits than when I saw her eating pine-bark on the Mokelumne, and in riding to the town of Sutter, I found that by a little spurring, she could raise a very passable gallop. The rains, however, by putting a stop to travel, had brought down the price of horses, so that after searching some time for a purchaser I could get no offer higher than \$50. I consented to let her go; we went into a store and weighed out the price in fine North Fork gold, and the new owner, after trotting her through the streets for about an hour, sold her again for \$60. I did not care to trace her fortunes further.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE OVERLAND EMIGRATION OF 1849.

SACRAMENTO CITY was the goal of the emigration by the northern routes. From the beginning of August to the last of December scarcely a day passed without the arrival of some man or company of men and families, from the mountains, to pitch their tents for a few days on the bank of the river and rest from their months of hardship. The vicissitudes through which these people had passed, the perils they had encountered and the toils they had endured seem to me without precedent in History. The story of thirty thousand souls accomplishing a journey of more than two thousand miles through a savage and but partially explored wilderness, crossing on their way two mountain chains equal to the Alps in height and asperity, besides broad tracts of burning desert, and plains of nearly equal desolation, where a few patches of stunted shrubs and springs of brackish water were their only stay, has in it so much of heroism, of daring and of sublime endurance, that we may vainly question the records of any age for its equal. Standing as I was, at the closing stage of that grand pilgrimage, the sight of these adventurers as they came in day by day, and the hearing of their stories, each of which had its own peculiar and separate character, had a more fascinating because more real interest than the tales of the glorious old travelers which so impress us in childhood.

It would be impossible to give, in a general description of the emigration, viewed as one great movement, a complete idea of its many wonderful phases. The experience of any single man, which a few years ago would have made him a hero for life, becomes mere common-place, when it is but one of many thousands; yet the spectacle of a great continent, through a region of one thousand miles from north to south, being overrun with these adventurous bands, cannot be pictured without the relation of many episodes of individual bravery and suffering. I will not attempt a full account of the emigration, but, as I have already given an outline of the stories of those who came by the Gila route, a similar sketch of what those encountered who took the Northern route—the great overland highway of the Continent—will not be without its interest in this place.

The great starting point for this route was Independence, Mo., where thousands were encamped through the month of April, waiting until the grass should be sufficiently high for their cattle, before they ventured on the broad ocean of the Plains. From the first of May to the first of June, company after company took its departure from the frontier of civilization, till the emigrant trail from Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri, to Fort Laramie, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, was one long line of mule-trains and wagons. The rich meadows of the Nebraska, or Platte, were settled for the time, and a single traveler could have journeyed for the space of a thousand miles, as certain of his lodging and regular meals as if he were riding through the old agricultural districts of the Middle States. The wandering tribes of Indians on the Plains—the Pawnees, Sioux and Arapahoes—were alarmed and bewildered by this strange apparition. They believed they were about to be swept away forever from their hunting-grounds and graves

As the season advanced and the great body of the emigrants got under way, they gradually withdrew from the vicinity of the trail and betook themselves to grounds which the former did not reach. All conflicts with them were thus avoided, and the emigrants passed the Plains with perfect immunity from their thievish and hostile visitations.

Another and more terrible scourge, however, was doomed to fall upon them. The cholera, ascending the Mississippi from New Orleans, reached St. Louis about the time of their departure from Independence, and overtook them before they were fairly embarked on the wilderness. The frequent rains of the early spring, added to the hardship and exposure of their travel, prepared the way for its ravages, and the first three or four hundred miles of the trail were marked by graves. It is estimated that about four thousand persons perished from this cause. Men were seized without warning with the most violent symptoms, and instances occurred in which the sufferer was left to die alone by the road-side, while his panic-stricken companions pushed forward, vainly trusting to get beyond the influence of the epidemic. Rough boards were planted at the graves of those who were buried near the trail, but there are hundreds of others lying unmarked by any memorial, on the bleak surface of the open plain and among the barren depths of the mountains. I have heard men tell how they have gone aside from their company to bury some old and cherished friend—a brother, it may often have been—performing the last rites alone and unaided, and leaving the remains where none but the wolf will ever seek their resting-place.

By the time the companies reached Fort Laramie the epidemic had expended its violence, and in the pure air of the elevated mountain region they were safe from its further attacks. Now

however, the real hardships of their journey began. Up and down the mountains that hem in the Sweetwater Valley—over the spurs of the Wind River chain—through the Devil's Gate, and past the stupendous mass of Rock Independence—they toiled slowly up to the South Pass, descended to the tributaries of the Colorado and plunged into the rugged defiles of the Timpanozu Mountains. Here the pasturage became scarce and the companies were obliged to take separate trails in order to find sufficient grass for their teams. Many, who, in their anxiety to get forward with speed, had thrown away a great part of the supplies that encumbered them, now began to want, and were frequently reduced, in their necessity, to make use of their mules and horses for food. It was not unusual for a mess, by way of variety to the tough mule-meat, to kill a quantity of rattle-snakes, with which the mountains abounded, and have a dish of them fried, for supper. The distress of many of the emigrants might have been entirely avoided, had they possessed any correct idea, at the outset of the journey, of its length and privations.

It must have been a remarkable scene, which the City of the Great Salt Lake presented during the summer. There, a community of religious enthusiasts, numbering about ten thousand, had established themselves beside an inland sea, in a grand valley shut in by snow-capped mountains, a thousand miles from any other civilized spot, and were dreaming of rebuilding the Temple and creating a New Jerusalem. Without this resting-place in mid-journey, the sufferings of the emigrants must have been much aggravated. The Mormons, however, whose rich grain-lands in the Valley of the Utah River had produced them abundance of supplies, were able to spare sufficient for those whose stock was exhausted. Two or three thousand, who arrived late in

the season, remained in the Valley all winter, fearing to undertake the toilsome journey which still remained.

Those who set out for California had the worst yet in store for them. Crossing the alternate sandy wastes and rugged mountain chains of the Great Basin to the Valley of Humboldt's River, they were obliged to trust entirely to their worn and weary animals for reaching the Sierra Nevada before the winter snows. The grass was scarce and now fast drying up in the scorching heat of mid-summer. In the endeavor to hasten forward and get the first chance of pasture, many again committed the same mistake of throwing away their supplies. I was told of one man, who, with a refinement of malice and cruelty which it would be impossible to surpass, set fire to the meadows of dry grass, for the sole purpose, it was supposed, of retarding the progress of those who were behind and might else overtake him. A company of the emigrants on the best horses which were to be obtained, pursued him and shot him from the saddle as he rode—a fate scarcely equal to his deserts.

The progress of the emigrants along the Valley of Humboldt's River is described as having been slow and toilsome in the extreme. The River, which lies entirely within the Great Basin,—whose waters, like those of the uplands of Central Asia, have no connexion with the sea—shrinks away towards the end of summer, and finally loses itself in the sand, at a place called the Sink. Here, the single trail across the Basin divides into three branches and the emigrants, leaving the scanty meadows about the Sink have before them an arid desert, varying from fifty to eighty miles in breadth, according to the route which they take. Many companies, on arriving at this place, were obliged to stop and recruit their exhausted animals, though exposed to the danger of being

detained there the whole winter, from the fall of snow on the Sierra Nevada. Another, and very large body of them, took the upper route to Lawson's Pass, which leads to the head of the Sacramento Valley; but the greater part, fortunately, chose the old traveled trails, leading to Bear Creek and the Yuba, by way of Truckee River, and to the head-waters of the Rio Americano by way of Carson's River.

The two latter routes are the shortest and best. After leaving the Sink of Humboldt's River, and crossing a desert of about fifty miles in breadth, the emigrant reaches the streams which are fed from the Sierra Nevada, where he finds good grass and plenty of game. The passes are described as terribly rugged and precipitous, leading directly up the face of the great snowy ridge. As, however, they are not quite eight thousand feet above the sea, and are reached from a plateau of more than four thousand feet, the ascent is comparatively short; while, on the western side, more than a hundred miles of mountain country must be passed, before reaching the level of the Sacramento Valley. There are frequent passes in the Sierra Nevada which were never crossed before the summer of 1849. Some of the emigrants, diverging from the known trail, sought a road for themselves, and found their way down from the snows to the head waters of the Tuolumne, the Calaveras and Feather River. The eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada is but imperfectly explored. All the emigrants concurred in representing it to me as an abrupt and broken region, the higher peaks of barren granite, the valleys deep and narrow, yet in many places timbered with pine and cedar of immense growth.

After passing the dividing ridge,—the descent from which was rendered almost impossible by precipices and steeps of naked rock - about thirty miles of alternate cañons and divides lay between

the emigrants and the nearest diggings. The steepness of the slopes of this range is hardly equalled by any other mountains in the world. The rivers seem to wind their way through the bottoms of chasms, and in many places it is impossible to get down to the water. The word cañon (meaning, in Spanish, a funnel,) has a peculiar adaptation to these cleft channels through which the rivers are poured. In getting down from the summit ridge the emigrants told me they were frequently obliged to take the oxen from the wagon and lower it with ropes ; but for the sheer descents which followed, another plan was adopted. The wheels were all locked, and only one yoke of oxen left in front ; a middling-sized pine was then cut down, and the butt fastened to the axle-tree, the branchy top dragging on the earth. The holding back of the oxen, the sliding of the locked wheels, and the resistance of the tree together formed an opposing power sufficient to admit of a slow descent ; but it was necessary to observe great care lest the pace should be quickened, for the slightest start would have overcome the resistance and given oxen, wagon and tree together a momentum that would have landed them at the bottom in a very different condition.

In August, before his departure for Oregon, Gen. Smith took the responsibility of ordering pack-mules and supplies to be provided at the expense of Government, and gave Major Rucker orders to dispatch relief companies into the Great Basin to succor the emigrants who might be remaining there, for want of provisions to advance further. In this step he was also warmly seconded by Gen. Riley, and the preparations were made with the least possible delay. Public meetings of the citizens of San Francisco were also held, to contribute means of relief. Major Rucker dispatched a party with supplies and fresh animals by way of the

Truckee River route to the Sink of Humboldt's River, while he took the expedition to Pitt River and Lawson's Pass, under his own command. The first party, after furnishing provisions on the road to all whom they found in need, reached the Sink, and started the families who were still encamped there, returning with them by the Carson River route and bringing in the last of the emigration, only a day or two before the heavy snows came on, which entirely blocked up the passes. But for this most timely aid, hundreds of persons must have perished by famine and cold.

Those who took the trail for Lawson's Pass fared even worse. They had been grossly deceived with regard to the route, which, instead of being a nearer passage into California, is actually two hundred miles longer than the other routes, and though there is no ridge of equal height to be crossed, the amount of rough mountain travel is even greater. The trail, after crossing the Sierra by a low gap, (which has lately been mentioned in connection with the Pacific Railroad,) enters the Valley of Pitt River, one of the tributaries of the Upper Sacramento. Following the course of this river for about ninety miles, it reaches a spur of the Sierra Nevada, which runs from the head waters of Feather River to near the Shaste Peak, closing up the level of the lower Sacramento Valley. These mountains are from five to six thousand feet in height and rugged in the extreme, and over them the weary emigrant must pass before the Land of Promise—the rich Valley of the Sacramento—meets his view.

At the time I returned to Sacramento City, Major Rucker had just returned from his expedition. He found a large body of emigrants scattered along Pitt River, many of them entirely destitute of provisions and others without their animals, which the predatory Indians of that region had stolen. Owing to the

large number who required his assistance, he was obliged to return to the ranches on Deer Creek and procure further supplies, leaving Mr. Peoples to hurry them on meanwhile. Everything was done to hasten their movement, but a strange and unaccountable apathy seemed to have taken possession of them. The season was late, and a single day added to the time requisite to get them into the Sacramento Valley might prove ruinous to them and their assistants. Whether the weary six months they passed in the wilderness had had the effect of destroying all their active energy and care for their own safety, or whether it was actual ignorance of their true situation and contempt of counsel because it seemed to wear the shape of authority, it is difficult to tell—but the effect was equally dangerous. After having improvidently thrown away, in the first part of the journey, the supplies so needful afterwards, they now held fast to useless goods, and refused to lighten the loads of their tired oxen. But few of them appeared to have a sense of the aid which was rendered them; instead of willingly coöperating with those who had charge of the relief party, they gave much unnecessary trouble and delayed the journey several days.

Of the companies which came by this route several small parties struck into the mountains to the southward of Pitt River, hoping to find an easy road to the diggings on Feather River. Of these, some reached the river, after many days of suffering and danger; others retraced their steps and by making desperate efforts regained the companies on Pitt River, while some, who had not been heard of at the time I left, were either locked up for the winter in the midst of terrible snows, or had already perished from hunger. I met with one or two who had been several days in the mountains without food, and only escaped death by a miracle. A

company of six, who set out on the hunt of some Indians who had stolen their cattle, never returned.

It happened to the emigrants as Major Rucker had forewarned them. A letter from Mr. Peoples, which he received during my stay gave a most striking account of the hardships to which they had subjected themselves. A violent storm came on while they were crossing the mountains to Deer Creek, and the mules, unaccustomed to the severe cold, sank down and died one after another. In spite of their remonstrances, Mr. Peoples obliged them to leave their wagons and hurry forward with the remaining animals. The women, who seemed to have far more energy and endurance than the men, were mounted on mules, and the whole party pushed on through the bleak passes of the mountains in the face of a raging storm. By extraordinary exertions, they were all finally brought into the Sacramento Valley, with the loss of many wagons and animals. On receiving this letter, Major Rucker set out for Lawson's Rancho on Deer Creek, where he saw the emigrants comfortably established for the winter. They had erected log-houses for shelter; the flour supplied to them from the Government stores and cattle from the large herds on the neighboring ranches, furnished them with the means of subsistence. The return to Sacramento City, in the depth of the rainy season, was an almost impossible undertaking.

The greater part of those who came in by the lower routes, started, after a season of rest, for the mining region, where many of them arrived in time to build themselves log huts for the winter. Some pitched their tents along the river, to wait for the genial spring season; while not a few took their axes and commenced the business of wood-cutting in the timber on its banks. When shipped to San Francisco, the wood, which they took with the

usual freedom of Uncle Sam's nephews, brought \$40 a cord ; the steamboats which called for it on their trips up and down, paid \$15. By the end of December the last man of the overland companies was safe on the western side of the Sierra Nevada, and the great interior wilderness resumed its ancient silence and solitude until the next spring.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ITALY OF THE WEST

AT the end of a week of rain, during which we had a few deceptive gleams of clear weather, I gave up all hope of getting to the Yuba and Feather Rivers, and took my passage in the steamer *Senator*, for San Francisco. The time for leaving was before sunrise, and the loud ringing of the first bell awoke me as I lay on my Chinese quilt in Capt. Baker's store. The weather had changed during the night, and when I went out of doors I found a keen, cloudless dawn, with the wind blowing down the river. Had the three weeks of dry season, so confidently predicted by the old settlers, actually commenced? I was not long in deliberating, though the remote chance of an opportunity for making my journey to the Shaste Peak, tempted me sorely; but the end proved that I decided aright, for on the second day after my arrival at San Francisco, the rains set in again worse than ever.

The steamer, which formerly ran between Boston and Eastport, was a strong, spacious and elegant boat. Notwithstanding the fare to San Francisco was \$30, she rarely carried less than two hundred passengers. When I went on board, her decks were already filled, and people were hurrying down from all parts of the town, her bell tolling meanwhile with the quick, incessant stroke

of a Hudson River boat, one minute before the time of starting. After my recent barbaric life, her long upper saloon, with its sofas and faded carpet, seemed splendid enough for a palace. As we sped down the Sacramento, and the well-known bell and sable herald made their appearance, requesting passengers to step to the Captain's office, I could scarcely believe that I was in California. On the hurricane deck I met with several persons who had been fellow-passengers on the Atlantic and Pacific. Some had been to the head of the Sacramento Valley; some on Feather River; some again on the famous Trinity, where they had got more fever than gold; but all, though not alike successful, seemed energetic and far from being discouraged.

After passing the town of Sutter, the bell rang for breakfast, and having previously procured a ticket for two dollars, I joined the anxious throng who were pressing down the cabin stairs. The long tables were set below in the same style as at home; the fare was abundant and well prepared; even on the Hudson it would have given rise to few grumblings. We steamed rapidly down the river, with Monte Diablo far before us. Owing to the twists and turns of the stream, it was but an uncertain landmark, now appearing on one side and now on the other. The cold snows of the Sierra Nevada were faintly seen in the eastern sky, but between the Sacramento and the mountains, the great plain stretched out in a sweep which to the north and south ran unbroken to the horizon. The banks, stripped now of their summer foliage, would have been dreary and monotonous, but for the tents and log-houses of the settlers and wood-cutters. I noticed in little spots where the thicket had been cleared away, patches of cabbages and other hardy vegetables, which seemed to have a thrifty growth.

We came at last to the entrance of the slough, the navigation

of which was a matter of considerable nicety. The current was but a few feet wider than the steamer, and many of the bends occasioned her considerable trouble. Her bow sometimes ran in among the boughs of the trees, where she could not well be backed without her stern going into the opposite bank. Much time and part of the planking of her wheel-houses were lost in getting through these narrow straits. The small craft on their way up the river were obliged to run close under the limbs of the trees and hug the banks tightly until we had passed. At last we came out again in the real Sacramento, avoiding the numerous other sloughs which make off into the tulé marshes, and soon reached the city of Montezuma, a solitary house on a sort of headland projecting into Suisun Bay and fronting its rival three-house city, New-York-of-the-Pacific. The bay was dancing to the fresh northern breeze as we skimmed its waters towards Benicia; Monte Diablo, on the other side, wore a blue mist over his scarred and rocky surface, which looked deceptively near.

The three weeks of rain which had fallen since I passed up the bay, had brought out a vivid green over all the hills. Those along the water were no longer lifeless and barren, but covered with sprouting vegetation. Benicia, as we approached it, appeared like a child's toy town set out on a piece of green velvet. Contrasted with this gay color, the changeless hue of the evergreen oaks appeared sombre almost to blackness; seen in unison with a cloudless sky and the glittering blue of the bay, the effect of the fresh green was indescribably cheerful and inspiring. We touched but a few minutes at Benicia, whose street presented a quiet appearance, coming from the thronged avenues of Sacramento City. The houses were mostly frame, of neat construction; a church with a small white spire, at the upper

end of the town, stood out brightly against the green of the hills behind.

Beyond these hills, at the distance of thirty-five miles, is the pleasant little town of Sonoma, Gen. Vallejo's residence. In summer it is reached from Sacramento City by a trail of forty miles, but when the rains come on, the tulé marshes running up from the bay between the river and the mountains, are flooded, and a circuit of more than a hundred miles must be made to get around them. Two days' journey north of Sonoma is Lake Clear, a beautiful sheet of water, sixty miles in length, embosomed in the midst of grand mountain scenery.

Sunset came on as we approached the strait opening from Pablo Bay into the Bay of San Francisco. The cloudless sky became gradually suffused with a soft rose-tint, which covered its whole surface, painting alike the glassy sheet of the bay, and glowing most vividly on the mountains to the eastward. The color deepened every moment, and the peaks of the Coast Range burned with a rich vermilion light, like that of a live coal. This faded gradually into as glowing a purple, and at last into a blue as intense as that of the sea at noonday. The first effect of the light was most wonderful; the mountains stretched around the horizon like a belt of varying fire and amethyst between the two roseate deeps of air and water; the shores were transmuted into solid, the air into fluid gems. Could the pencil faithfully represent this magnificent transfiguration of Nature, it would appear utterly unreal and impossible to eyes which never beheld the reality. It was no transient spectacle, fading away ere one could feel its surpassing glory. It lingered, and lingered, changing almost imperceptibly and with so beautiful a decay, that one lost himself in the enjoyment of each successive charm, without regret for those which

were over. The dark blue of the mountains deepened into the night-garb of dusky shadow without any interfusion of dead ashy color, and the heaven overhead was spangled with all its stars long before the brilliant arch of orange in the west had sunk below the horizon. I have seen the dazzling sunsets of the Mediterranean flush the beauty of its shores, and the mellow skies which Claude used to contemplate from the Pincian Hill; but, lovely as they are in my memory, they seem cold and pale when I think of the splendor of such a scene, on the Bay of San Francisco.

The approach to the city was very imposing in the dusk. The crowd of shipping, two or three miles in length, stretched along the water in front; the triple crown of the hills behind was clearly marked against the sky, and from the broad space covered with sparkling lights, glimmerings of tents and white buildings, and the sounds of active life, I half believed that some metropolis of a century's growth lay before me. On landing, notwithstanding I had only been absent three weeks, I had some difficulty in recognizing localities. The change appeared greater than at any previous arrival, on account of the removal of a great many of the old buildings and the erection of larger and more substantial edifices in their stead.

After a few days of violent rain, the sky cleared and we had a week of the most delicious weather I ever experienced. The temperature was at no time lower than 50° , and in the middle of the day rose to 70° . When the floating gauze of mist had cleared off the water, the sky was without a cloud for the remainder of the day, and of a fresh, tender blue, which was in exquisite relief to the pale green of the hills. To enjoy the delightful temperature and fine scenery of the Bay, I used frequently to climb a hill just in the rear of the town, whence the harbor, the strait into Pabla

Bay, the Golden Gate and the horizon of the Pacific could all be seen at one view. On the top of the hill are the graves of several Russians, who came out in the service of the Russian Company, each surmounted with a black cross, bearing an inscription in their language. All this ground, however, has been surveyed, staked into lots and sold, and at the same rate of growth the city will not be long in climbing the hill and disturbing the rest of the Muscovites.

In company with my friends, the Moores, I made many short excursions among the hills, during this charming season. Our most frequent trip was to Fresh Pond, in the neighborhood of the old Presidio. With a gray donkey—an invaluable beast, by the way—harnessed to a light cart, in which we had placed two or three empty barrels, we drove out to the place, a little basin shut in by the hills, and only divided by a narrow bushy ridge from the waters of the Golden Gate. Several tents were pitched on its margin; the washmen and gardeners had established themselves there and were diligently plying their respective occupations. A little strip of moist bottom adjoining the pond had been cleared of its thickets and was partly ploughed, showing a rich black loam. The washerwomen, of whom there were a few, principally Mexicans and Indians, had established themselves on one side of the pond and the washmen on another. The latter went into the business on a large scale, having their tents for ironing, their large kettles for boiling the clothes and their fluted wash-boards along the edge of the water. It was an amusing sight to see a great, burly, long-bearded fellow, kneeling on the ground, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and rubbing a shirt on the board with such violence that the suds flew and the buttons, if there were any, must soon snap off. Their clear-starching and ironing were still more ludi-

crous , but, notwithstanding, they succeeded fully as well as the women, and were rapidly growing rich from the profits of their business. Where \$8 a dozen is paid for washing clothes, it is very easy to earn double the wages of a Member of Congress

The sunsets we saw from the hills as we drove slowly back with the barrels filled, were all of the same gorgeous character. The air had a purity and sweetness which made the long hour of twilight enchanting, and we frequently lingered on the road till after dark. We helped our patient donkey up the hill by pushing behind his cart—an aid he seemed fully to appreciate, for he pulled at such times with much more spirit. He had many curious ways about him, the most remarkable of which was his capacity for digestion. Cloth, canvas and shavings seemed as much his natural food as hay or green grass. Whenever he broke loose during the night, which was not seldom, it was generally followed in the morning by a visit from some emigrant, claiming damages for the amount of tent-covering which had been chewed up. Once, indeed, a man who had indulged rather freely in bad brandy, at twenty-five cents a glass, wandered in the dark to the place where the donkey was tethered, lay down at his feet and fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning, sobered by the coolness of his bed and foggy blankets, he found to his utter surprise and horror, that the ravenous beast had not only devoured his cap but cropped nearly all the hair from one side of his head ! As the man's hair happened to be glowing in color and coarse in texture, the mistake of the donkey in taking it to be swamp hay, is not so much to be wondered at.

The valley about the Mission Dolores was charmingly green and beautiful at this time. Several of the former miners, in anticipation of the great influx of emigrants into the country and a

consequent market for vegetables, pitched their tents on the best spots along the Mission Creek, and began preparing the ground for gardens. The valley was surveyed and staked into lots almost to the summit of the mountains, and the operation of squatting was performed even by many of the citizens of San Francisco, for the purpose of obtaining titles to the land. Some gentlemen of my acquaintance came into the possession of certain stone quarries, meadow lands and fine sheep-pastures, in this manner; whereupon a friend of mine, and myself, concluded to try the experiment, thinking the experience might, at least, be of some benefit. So, one fine morning we rode out to the Mission, where we found the surveyor on one of the hills, chopping up the chapparal into "hundred vara" lots. He received us cordially, and on looking over his map of the locality, found two adjoining lots of two hundred varas each, which were still unoccupied. They lay on the western side of the Valley, on the slope of the mountains. We hastened away, crossed two yawning arroyos and climbed the steep, where, truly enough, we found the stakes indicating the limits of the survey. I chose a little valley, scooped out between two peaks of the ridge, and watered by a clear stream which trickled down through its centre. My friend took a broader tract, which was not so well watered as mine; however, on examining the soil, we agreed that it would produce good crops of cabbages and turnips. Accordingly, we marched leisurely over the ground, ascended to its highest part, and took a seat on a boulder of gray rock, which stood exactly upon the line between our two territories. All the beautiful Valley lay beneath us, with the bay beyond, a part of the shipping of San Francisco, and Monte Diablo in the distance—a fine prospect for a squatter!

On our return to the city, we debated whether we should pro

cure materials for a tent and take up an abode on the lofty ~~lets~~ ; but, as it was not at all clear that any land could be granted, or that it would be worth taking even if we should become bona fide settlers, we finally determined to let the matter rest. We did not repeat our visit, and we learned soon afterwards that violent disputes had arisen between the inhabitants of the Mission and the emigrants who had commenced gardening. I, who never owned a rood of land in my life, would nevertheless have accepted the proprietorship of one of the bleak pinnacles of the Sierra Nevada—or better, the top of the Shaste Peak—could it have been given me, for the mere satisfaction of feeling that there was one spot of the Earth which I might claim as my own, down to its burning centre.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SAN FRANCISCO, FOUR MONTHS LATER.

OF all the marvellous phases of the history of the Present, the growth of San Francisco is the one which will most tax the belief of the Future. Its parallel was never known, and shall never be beheld again. I speak only of what I saw with my own eyes. When I landed there, a little more than four months before, I found a scattering town of tents and canvas houses, with a show of frame buildings on one or two streets, and a population of about six thousand. Now, on my last visit, I saw around me an actual metropolis, displaying street after street of well-built edifices, filled with an active and enterprising people and exhibiting every mark of permanent commercial prosperity. Then, the town was limited to the curve of the Bay fronting the anchorage and bottoms of the hills. Now it stretched to the topmost heights, followed the shore around point after point, and sending back a long arm through a gap in the hills, took hold of the Golden Gate and was building its warehouses on the open strait and almost fronting the blue horizon of the Pacific. Then, the gold-seeking sojourner lodged in muslin rooms and canvas garrets, with a philosophic lack of furniture, and ate his simple though substantial fare from pine boards. Now, lofty hotels, gaudy with verandas and balconies, were met with in all quarters, furnished with home luxury,

and aristocratic restaurants presented daily their long bills of fare, rich with the choicest technicalities of the Parisian cuisine. Then, vessels were coming in day after day, to lie deserted and useless at their anchorage. Now scarce a day passed, but some cluster of sails, bound *outward* through the Golden Gate, took their way to all the corners of the Pacific. Like the magic seed of the Indian juggler, which grew, blossomed and bore fruit before the eyes of his spectators, San Francisco seemed to have accomplished in a day the growth of half a century.

When I first landed in California, bewildered and amazed by what seemed an unnatural standard of prices, I formed the opinion that there would be before long a great crash in speculation. Things, it appeared then, had reached the crisis, and it was pronounced impossible that they could remain stationary. This might have been a very natural idea at the time, but the subsequent course of affairs proved it to be incorrect. Lands, rents, goods and subsistence continued steadily to advance in cost, and as the credit system had been meanwhile prudently contracted, the character of the business done was the more real and substantial. Two or three years will pass, in all probability, before there is a positive abatement of the standard of prices. There will be fluctuations in the meantime, occasioning great gains and losses, but the fall in rents and real estate, when it comes, as it inevitably must in the course of two or three years, will not be so crushing as I at first imagined. I doubt whether it will seriously injure the commercial activity of the place. Prices will never fall to the same standard as in the Atlantic States. Fortunes will always be made by the sober, intelligent, industrious, and energetic; but no one who is either too careless, too spiritless or too ignorant to succeed at home, need trouble himself about emigrating. The same

general rule holds good, as well here as elsewhere, and it is all the better for human nature that it is so.

Not only was the heaviest part of the business conducted on cash principles, but all rents, even to lodgings in hotels, were required to be paid in advance. A single bowling-alley, in the basement story of the Ward House—a new hotel on Portsmouth-Square—prepaid \$5,000 monthly. The firm of Findley, Johnson & Co. sold their real estate, purchased a year previous, for \$20,000, at \$300,000; \$25,000 down, and the rest in monthly instalments of \$12,500. This was a fair specimen of the speculations daily made. Those on a lesser scale were frequently of a very amusing character, but the claims on one's astonishment were so constant, that the faculty soon wore out, and the most unheard-of operations were looked upon as matters of course. Among others that came under my observation, was one of a gentleman who purchased a barrel of alum for \$3, the price in New York being \$9. It happened to be the only alum in the place, and as there was a demand for it shortly afterwards, he sold the barrel for \$150. Another purchased all the candle-wick to be found, at an average price of 10 cts. per lb., and sold it in a short time at \$2 25 per lb. A friend of mine expended \$10,000 in purchasing barley, which in a week brought \$20,000. The greatest gains were still made by the gambling tables and the eating-houses. Every device that art could suggest was used to swell the custom of the former. The latter found abundant support in the necessities of a large floating population, in addition to the swarm of permanent residents.

For a month or two previous to this time, money had been very scarce in the market, and from ten to fifteen per cent. monthly, was paid, with the addition of good security. Notwithstanding the

quantity of coin brought into the country by emigrants, and the millions of gold dust used as currency, the actual specie basis was very small compared with the immense amount of business transacted. Nevertheless, I heard of nothing like a failure; the principal firms were prompt in all their dealings, and the chivalry of Commerce—to use a new phrase—was as faithfully observed as it could have been in the old marts of Europe and America. The merchants had a 'Change and News-room, and were beginning to coöperate in their movements and consolidate their credit. A stock company which had built a long wharf at the foot of Sacramento-st. declared a dividend of ten per cent. within six weeks after the wharf was finished. During the muddy season, it was the only convenient place for landing goods, and as the cost of constructing it was enormous, so were likewise the charges for wharfage and storage.

There had been a vast improvement in the means of living since my previous visit to San Francisco. Several large hotels had been opened, which were equal in almost every respect to houses of the second class in the Atlantic cities. The Ward House, the Graham House, imported bodily from Baltimore, and the St. Francis Hotel, completely threw into the shade all former establishments. The rooms were furnished with comfort and even luxury, and the tables lacked few of the essentials of good living, according to a 'home' taste. The sleeping apartments of the St. Francis were the best in California. The cost of board and lodging was \$150 per month—which was considered unusually cheap. A room at the Ward House cost \$250 monthly, without board. The principal restaurants charged \$35 a week for board, and there were lodging houses where a berth or "bunk"—one out of fifty in the same room—might be had for \$6 a week

The model of these establishments—which were far from being ‘model lodging-houses’—was that of a ship. A number of state-rooms, containing six berths each, ran around the sides of a large room, or cabin, where the lodgers resorted to read, write, smoke and drink at their leisure. The state-rooms were consequently filled with foul and unwholesome air, and the noises in the cabin prevented the passengers from sleeping, except between midnight and four o’clock.

The great want of San Francisco was society. Think of a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, peopled by men alone! The like of this was never seen before. Every man was his own housekeeper doing, in many instances, his own sweeping, cooking, washing and mending. Many home-arts, learned rather by observation than experience, came conveniently into play. He who cannot make a bed, cook a beefsteak, or sew up his own rips and rents, is unfit to be a citizen of California. Nevertheless, since the town began to assume a permanent shape, very many of the comforts of life in the East were attainable. A family may now live there without suffering any material privations; and if every married man, who intends spending some time in California, would take his family with him, a social influence would soon be created to which we might look for the happiest results.

Towards the close of my stay, the city was as dismal a place as could well be imagined. The glimpse of bright, warm, serene weather passed away, leaving in its stead a raw, cheerless, south-east storm. The wind now and then blew a heavy gale, and the cold, steady fall of rain, was varied by claps of thunder and sudden blasts of hail. The mud in the streets became little short of fathomless, and it was with difficulty that the mules could drag their empty wagons through. A powerful London dray-horse, a

very giant in harness, was the only animal able to pull a good load ; and I was told that he earned his master \$100 daily. I saw occasionally a company of Chinese workmen, carrying bricks and mortar, slung by ropes to long bamboo poles. The plank side-walks, in the lower part of the city, ran along the brink of pools and quicksands, which the Street Inspector and his men vainly endeavored to fill by hauling cart-loads of chapparal and throwing sand on the top ; in a day or two the gulf was as deep as ever. The side-walks, which were made at the cost of \$5 per foot, bridged over the worst spots, but I was frequently obliged to go the whole length of a block in order to get on the other side. One could not walk any distance, without getting at least ankle-deep, and although the thermometer rarely sank below 50°, it was impossible to stand still for even a short time without a death-like chill taking hold of the feet. As a consequence of this, coughs and bronchial affections were innumerable. The universal custom of wearing the pantaloons inside the boots threatened to restore the knee-breeches of our grandfathers' times. Even women were obliged to shorten their skirts, and wear high-topped boots. The population seemed to be composed entirely of dismounted hussars. All this will be remedied when the city is two years older, and Portsmouth Square boasts a pavé as elegant as that on the dollar side of Broadway.

The severe weather occasioned a great deal of sickness, especially among those who led an exposed life. The city overflowed with people, and notwithstanding buildings were continually growing up like mushrooms, over night, hundreds who arrived were obliged to lodge in tents, with which the summits of the hills were covered. Fever-and-ague and dysentery were the prevailing complaints, the great prevalence of which was owing undoubtedly to

exposure and an irregular habit of life. An association was formed to relieve those in actual want, many of the wealthiest and most influential citizens taking an honorable part in the matter. Many instances of lamentable destitution were by this means brought to light. Nearly all the hospitals of the place were soon filled, and numbers went to the Sandwich Islands to recruit. The City Hospital, a large, well ventilated and regulated establishment, contained about fifty patients. The attending physician described to me several cases of nearly hopeless lunacy which had come under his care, some of them produced by disappointment and ill-luck, and others by sudden increase of fortune. Poor human nature!

In the midst of the rains, we were greeted one morning with a magnificent spectacle. The wind had blown furiously during the night, with violent falls of rain, but the sun rose in a spotless sky, revealing the Coast Mountains across the bay wrapped in snow half-way down their sides. For two days they wore their dazzling crown, which could be seen melting away hour by hour, from their ridges and cloven ravines. This was the only snow I saw while in San Francisco; only once did I notice any appearance of frost. The grass was green and vigorous, and some of the more hardy plants in blossom; vegetables, it is well known, flourish with equal luxuriance during the winter season. At one of the restaurants, I was shown some remarkable specimens of the growth of California soil—potatoes weighing from one to five pounds each; beets and turnips eight inches in diameter, and perfectly sweet and sound; and large, silver-skinned onions, whose delicate flavor the most inveterate enemy of this honest vegetable could not but have relished. A gentleman who visited the port of Bodega, informed me that he saw in the garden of Capt. Smith, the owner of the

place, pea-vines which had produced their third crop from the same root in one summer.

As the rains drove the deer and other animals down from the mountains, game of all kinds became abundant. Fat elks and splendid black-tailed does hung at the doors of all the butcher-shops, and wild geese, duck and brant, were brought into the city by the wagon-load. "Grizzly bear steak," became a choice dish at the eating-houses; I had the satisfaction one night of eating a slice of one that had weighed eleven hundred pounds. The flesh was of a bright red color, very solid, sweet, and nutritious; its flavor was preferable to that of the best pork. The large native hare, a specimen of which occasionally found its way to the restaurants, is nowise inferior to that of Europe. As an illustration of the money which might be spent in procuring a meal no better than an ordinary hotel-dinner at home, I may mention that a dinner for fifteen persons, to which I was invited, at the "Excelsior," cost the giver of it \$225.

The effect of a growing prosperity and some little taste of luxury was readily seen in the appearance of the business community of San Francisco. The slouched felt hats gave way to narrow-brimmed black beavers; flannel shirts were laid aside, and white linen, though indifferently washed, appeared instead; dress and frock coats, of the fashion of the previous year in the Atlantic side, came forth from trunks and sea-chests; in short, a San Francisco merchant was almost as smooth and spruce in his outward appearance as a merchant anywhere else. The hussar boot, however, was obliged to be worn, and a variation of the Mexican sombrero—a very convenient and becoming head-piece—came into fashion among the younger class.

The steamers which arrived at this time brought large quan

ties of newspapers from all parts of the Atlantic States. The speculation which had been so successful at first, was completely overdone; there was a glut in the market, in consequence whereof newspapers came down to fifty and twenty-five cents apiece. The leading journals of New-York, New-Orleans and Boston were cried at every street-corner. The two papers established in the place issued editions "for the Atlantic Coast," at the sailing of every steamer for Panama. The offices were invaded by crowds of purchasers, and the slow hand-presses in use could not keep pace with the demand. The profits of these journals were almost incredible, when contrasted with their size and the amount of their circulation. Neither of them failed to count their gains at the rate of \$75,000 a year, clear profit.

My preparations for leaving San Francisco, were made with the regret that I could not remain longer and see more of the wonderful growth of the Empire of the West. Yet I was fortunate in witnessing the most peculiar and interesting stages of its progress, and I took my departure in the hope of returning at some future day to view the completion of these magnificent beginnings. The world's history has no page so marvellous as that which has just been turned in California.

CHAPTER XXX.

SOCIETY IN CALIFORNIA.

THERE are some features of society in California, which I have hitherto failed to touch upon in my narrative, but which deserve a passing notice before I take my final leave of that wonderful land. The direct effect of the state of things growing out of the discovery of the placers, was to develop new qualities and traits of character, not in single individuals but in every individual of the entire community—traits frequently most unlooked-for in those who exhibited them in the most marked degree. Society, therefore, was for the time cast into new forms, or, rather, deprived of any fixed form. A man, on coming to California, could no more expect to retain his old nature unchanged, than he could retain in his lungs the air he had inhaled on the Atlantic shore.

The most immediate and striking change which came upon the greater portion of the emigrants was an increase of activity, and proportionately, of reckless and daring spirit. It was curious to see how men hitherto noted for their prudence and caution took sudden leave of those qualities, to all appearance, yet only prospered the more thereby. Perhaps there was at bottom a vein of keen, shrewd calculation, which directed their seemingly heedless movements; certain it is, at least, that for a long time the rashest

speculators were the most fortunate. It was this fact, no doubt, that seemed so alarming to persons newly-arrived, and gave rise to unnumbered predictions of the speedy and ruinous crash of the whole business fabric of San Francisco. But nothing is more contagious than this spirit of daring and independent action, and the most doleful prophets were, ere long, swallowed up in the same whirlpool against which they had warned others.

The emigrants who arrive in California, very soon divide into two distinct classes. About two-thirds, or possibly three-fourths of them are active, hopeful and industrious. They feel this singular intoxication of society, and go to work at something, no matter what, by which they hope to thrive. The remaining portion see everything "through a glass, darkly." Their first bright anticipations are unrealized; the horrid winds of San Francisco during the dry season, chill and unnerve them: or, if they go to the placers, the severe labor and the ill success of inexperienced hands, completes their disgust. They commit a multitude of sins in the shape of curses upon every one who has written or spoken favorably of California. Some of them return home without having seen the country at all, and others, even if they obtain profitable situations, labor without a will. It is no place for a slow, an over-cautious, or a desponding man. The emigrant should be willing to work, not only at one business, but many, if need be; the grumbler or the idler had far better stay at home.

It cannot be denied that the very activity of California society created a spirit of excitement which frequently led to dangerous excesses. The habits of the emigrants, never, even at home, very slow and deliberate, branched into all kinds of wild offshoots, the necessary effect of the sudden glow and expansion which they experienced. Those who retained their health seemed to revel in an

exuberance of animal spirits, which carried them with scarce a jar over barriers and obstacles that would have brought others to a full stand. There was something exceedingly hearty, cordial and encouraging in the character of social intercourse. The ordinary forms of courtesy were flung aside with a bluntness of good-fellowship infinitely preferable, under the circumstances. I was constantly reminded of the stories of Northern History—of the stout Vikings and Jarls who exulted in their very passions and made their heroes of those who were most jovial at the feast and most easily kindled with the rage of battle. Indeed, it required but little effort of the imagination to revive those iron ages, when the rugged gold-diggers, with their long hair and unshorn beards, were grouped around some mountain camp-fire, revelling in the ruddy light and giving full play to a mirth so powerful and profound that it would not have shamed the Berserkers.

The most common excesses into which the Californians run, are drinking and gambling. I say drinking, rather than drunkenness, for I saw very little of the latter. But a single case came under my observation while I was in the gold region. The man's friends took away his money and deposited it in the hands of the Alcalde, then tied him to a tree where they left him till he became sober. The practice of drinking, nevertheless, was widely prevalent, and its effects rendered more destructive by the large amount of bad liquor which was sent into the country. Gambling, in spite of universal public sentiment against it, grew and flourished; the disappointment and ruin of many emigrants were owing to its existence. The gamblers themselves were in many instances men who had led orderly and respectable lives at home. I have heard some of them frankly avow that nothing would induce them to acquaint their friends and families with the nature of their occupa-

tion, they would soon have enough, they said, and then they would wash their hands of the unclean stain, and go home to lead more honorable lives. But alas! it is not so easy to wash out the memory of self-degradation. If these men have in truth any sentiment of honor remaining, every coin of the wealth they have hoarded will awaken a shameful consciousness of the base and unmanly business by which it was obtained.

In spite, however, of all these dissipating and disorganizing influences, the main stock of society was sound, vigorous and progressive. The rank shoots, while they might have slightly weakened the trunk, only showed the abundant life of the root. In short, without wishing to be understood as apologizing in any degree for the evils which existed, it was evident that had the Californians been more cool, grave and deliberate in their temperament—had they lacked the fiery energy and impulsive spirit which pushed them irresistibly forward—the dangers which surrounded them at the outset would have been far more imminent. Besides, this energy did not run at random; it was in the end directed by an enlightened experience, and that instinct of Right, which is the strength and security of a self-governed People. Hundreds of instances might be adduced to show that the worst passions of our nature were speedily developed in the air of California, but the one grand lesson of the settlement and organization of the country is of a character that ennobles the race.

The unanimity with which all united in this work—the frankness with which the old prejudices of sect and party were disclaimed—the freshly-awakened pride of country, which made every citizen jealously and disinterestedly anxious that she should acquit herself honorably in the eyes of the Nation at large—formed a spectacle which must claim our entire admiration. In view of

the splendid future which is opening for California it insures her a stable foundation on which to build the superstructure of her health and power.

After what has been said, it will appear natural that California should be the most democratic country in the world. The practical equality of all the members of a community, whatever might be the wealth, intelligence or profession of each, was never before thoroughly demonstrated. Dress was no gauge of respectability, and no honest occupation, however menial in its character, affected a man's standing. Lawyers, physicians and ex-professors dug cellars, drove ox-teams, sawed wood and carried luggage; while men who had been Army privates, sailors, cooks or day laborers were at the head of profitable establishments and not infrequently assisted in some of the minor details of Government. A man who would consider his fellow beneath him, on account of his appearance or occupation, would have had some difficulty in living peaceably in California. The security of the country is owing, in no small degree, to this plain, practical development of what the French reverence as an abstraction, under the name of *Fraternité*. To sum up all in three words, LABOR IS RESPECTABLE: may it never be otherwise, while a grain of gold is left to glitter in Californian soil!

I have dwelt with the more earnestness on these features of Society because they do not seem to be fully appreciated on this side of the Continent. I cannot take leave, in the regular course of my narrative, of a land where I found so much to Nature to admire and enjoy, without attempting to give some general, though imperfect view of Man, as he appeared under those new and wonderful influences.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LEAVING SAN FRANCISCO.

THE rainy season, by rendering further travel very unsatisfactory and laborious, if not impossible, put an end to my wanderings in California, which, in fact, had already extended beyond the period I had originally fixed for my stay. I was therefore anxious to set out on my homeward journey through Mexico, to which I looked forward with glowing anticipations. Rather than wait for the steamer of Jan. 1st., I decided to take one of the sailing packets up for Mazatlan, as the trip down the coast is usually made in from ten to fifteen days. The most promising chance was that of a Peruvian brigantine belonging to a German house, which I was assured would sail on the 15th of December. A heavy gale coming up at the time put this out of the question. I waited until the 17th, when I went on board, determined to set foot no more in San Franciscan mud. The brigantine—which bore the name of *Iquiqueña*, from the Peruvian port of Iquiqua—was a small, rakish craft, built at the Island of Chiloë for a smuggler in the opium trade; having been afterwards purchased by a house in Callao, she still retained the Peruvian colors.

In her low, confined cabin, containing eight berths, which were reached by a dark and crooked well, opening on the deck near the

rudder, seven passengers were crowded—Americans, Mexicans and Venezuelans—besides the captain, mate, supercargo and steward who were Germans, as were likewise the greater part of the crew. To complete the circle that met around our little table to discuss the invariable daily dinner of rice soup and boiled beef, I must not omit mentioning a Chinese dog, as eccentric in his behavior as the Celestials on shore. The captain and crew did nothing to falsify the national reputation for tardiness and delay. In our case the *poco tiempo* of the Chagres boatmen was outdone. Seven days were we doomed to spend in the Bay, before the almost hopeless conjunction of wind, tide, crew, passengers and vessel started us from our anchorage. On getting aboard, the captain declared everything to be in readiness, except the wood and water which would be forthcoming next day. Having some experience of German deliberation, I at once resigned myself to three days delay. The next day was stormy and rough; on the second, two casks of water were brought on board; the third was stormy; the wood was purchased on the fourth; and on the fifth, the sailors quarreled about their pay and refused to go to sea.

While we thus lay in the harbor, just inside the Rincon, trying to bear with patience a delay so vexatious, one of the terrible south-east gales came on. The wind gradually rose through the night, and its violence was heard and felt in the whistle of the rigging and the uneasy roll of our brigantine. When morning dawned, the sky was as gray and cold as an arch of granite, except towards the south-east, where a streak of dun light seemed like the opening through which the whole fury of the blast was poured upon the bay. The timbers of the shipping creaked as they were tossed about by the lashed and driven waters; the rigging hummed and roared till the ropes were ready to snap with

the violence of their vibrations. There was little rain accompanying the gale, but every drop stung like a shot. Seen under a sky and through an atmosphere from which all sensation of light and warmth was gone, the town and hills of San Francisco appeared as if cast in bronze, so cold, dark, and severe were their outlines. The blackest thunder-gusts I ever saw, had nothing so savage and relentless in their expression. All day and night, having dragged our anchor and drifted on the shoals, we lay thumping heavily with every swell, while a large barque, with three anchors out, threatened to stave in our bows. Towards morning the rain increased, and in the same proportion the gale abated. During its prevalence five or six vessels were injured, and two or three entirely lost.

The sailors having been pacified, the supercargo taken on board, and the brig declared ready for sea, we were detained another day on account of the anchor sticking fast in the mud, and still another through lack of a favorable wind. Finally, on the eighth day after going on board, the brig was warped through the crowded vessels, and took the first of the ebb tide, with a light breeze, to run out of the harbor.

I went on deck, in the misty daybreak, to take a parting look at the town and its amphitheatric hills. As I turned my face shoreward, a little spark appeared through the fog. Suddenly it shot up into a spiry flame, and at the same instant I heard the sound of gongs, bells and trumpets, and the shouting of human voices. The calamity, predicted and dreaded so long in advance, that men ceased to think of it, had come at last—San Francisco was on fire! The blaze increased with fearful rapidity. In fifteen minutes, it had risen into a broad, flickering column, making all the shore, the misty air and the water ruddy as with another

sunrise. The sides of new frame houses, scattered through the town, tents high up on the hills, and the hulls and listless sails of vessels in the bay, gleamed and sparkled in the thick atmosphere. Meanwhile the roar and tumult swelled, and above the clang of gongs and the cries of the populace, I could hear the crackling of blazing timbers, and the smothered sound of falling roofs. I climbed into the rigging and watched the progress of the conflagration. As the flames leaped upon a new dwelling, there was a sudden whirl of their waving volumes—an embracing of the frail walls in their relentless clasp—and, a second afterwards, from roof and rafter and foundation-beam shot upward a jet of fire, steady and intense at first, but surging off into spiral folds and streamers, as the timbers were parted and fell.

For more than hour, while we were tacking in the channel between Yerba Buena Island and the anchorage, there was no apparent check to the flames. Before passing Fort Montgomery, however, we heard several explosions in quick succession, and conjectured that vigorous measures had been taken to prevent further destruction. When at last, with a fair breeze and bright sky, we were dashing past the rock of Alcatraz, the red column had sunk away to a smouldering blaze, and nothing but a heavy canopy of smoke remained to tell the extent of the conflagration. The Golden Gate was again before us, and I looked through its mountain-walls on the rolling Pacific, with full as pleasant an excitement as I had looked inwards, four months before, eager to catch the first glimpse of the new Eldorado.

The breeze freshened, the swell increased, and as the breakers of the entrance receded behind us, we entered the rough sea left by a recent gale. In trying to haul close to the wind, the captain discovered that the rudder was broken. Immediately afterwards,

there was a cry of "a leak!" and from the terror on the faces of the mate and sailors, I thought that nothing less than a dozen blankets could stop the opening. The pumps were rigged in haste, but little water was found in the hold, and on examination it appeared that the leak, which was in the bow, was caused by the springing apart of the planking from a violent blow on the rocks which the brig had received a short time previous. The captain decided at once to return, much to our disappointment, as the wind was fair for Mazatlan. We were twenty miles from the entrance, and after beating up until next morning found ourselves just as far off as ever. The wind continuing fair, the captain at length listened to us, and turned again towards Mazatlan. A change of wind again changed his mind, and all that day and the next we tacked back and forth—sometimes running out towards the Farellones, sometimes close under the lee of the Punta de Los Reyes, and again driven down the coast as far, on the other side of the entrance. What our brig gained in tacking, she lost in leeway, and as the rudder hung by a single pintle, she minded her helm badly. On the afternoon of the third day we were becalmed, but drifted into the entrance of the Gate with the flood-tide, in company with fifteen vessels, that had been waiting outside. A light southern breeze springing up, enabled us to reach the anchorage west of Clark's Point in the night; so that next morning, after landing on the beach and walking through a mile of deep mud, I was once more in San Francisco.

I hastened immediately to Portsmouth Square, the scene of the conflagration. All its eastern front, with the exception of the Delmonico Restaurant at the corner of Clay-st. was gone, together with the entire side of the block, on Washington-st. The Eldorado, Parker House, Denison's Exchange and the United States

Coffee House—forming, collectively, the great rendezvous of the city, where everybody could be found at some time of the day—were among the things that had been. The fronts of the Verandah, Aguila de Oro, and other hells on Washington-st. were blackened and charred from the intense heat to which they were subjected, and from many of the buildings still hung the blankets by means of which they were saved. Three days only had elapsed since the fire, yet in that time all the rubbish had been cleared away, and the frames of several houses were half raised. All over the burnt space sounded one incessant tumult of hammers, axes and saws. In one week after the fire, the Eldorado and Denison's Exchange stood completely roofed and weatherboarded, and would soon be ready for occupation. The Parker House was to be rebuilt of brick, and the timbers of the basement floor were already laid. The Exchange had been contracted for at \$15,000, to be finished in two weeks, under penalty of forfeiting \$150 for every additional day. In three weeks from the date of the fire, it was calculated that all the buildings destroyed would be replaced by new ones, of better construction. The loss by the conflagration was estimated at \$1,500,000—an immense sum, when the number and character of the buildings destroyed, is considered. This did not include the loss in a business way, which was probably \$500,000 more. The general business of the place, however, had not been injured. The smaller gambling hells around and near Portsmouth Square were doing a good business, now that the head-quarters of the profession were destroyed.

Notwithstanding there was no air stirring at the time, the progress of the fire, as described by those who were on the spot, had something terrific in its character. The canvas partitions of rooms shrivelled away like paper in the breath of the flames, and the dry

resinous wood of the outer walls radiated a heat so intense that houses at some distance were obliged to be kept wet to prevent their ignition. Nothing but the prompt measures of the city authorities and a plentiful supply of blankets in the adjacent stores, saved all the lower part of the city from being swept away. The houses in the path of the flames were either blown up or felled like trees, by cutting off the ground timbers with axes, and pulling over the structure with ropes fastened to the roof. The Spanish merchants on Washington street, and others living in adobe houses in the rear, were completely stupified by the danger, and refused to have their buildings blown up. No one listened to them, and five minutes afterwards, adobes, timbers and merchandise went into the air together.

A very few persons, out of the thousands present, did the work of arresting the flames. At the time of the most extreme danger hundreds of idle spectators refused to lend a hand, unless they were paid enormous wages. One of the principal merchants, I was told, offered a dollar a bucket for water, and made use of several thousand buckets in saving his property. All the owners of property worked incessantly, and were aided by their friends but at least five thousand spectators stood idle in the plaza. I hope their selfish indifference is not a necessary offshoot of society here. It is not to be disputed, however, that constant familiarity with the shifting of Fortune between her farthest extremes, blunts very much the sympathies of the popular heart.

The German house of whom I had obtained a passage for Mazatlan, was burned out, but the supercargo soon discovered its whereabouts. A committee of sea-captains, appointed to examine the brigantine, reported that she could be made ready for sea in three or four days. Under these circumstances, the own

ers refused to refund more than half the passage-money, which was \$75, to those of us who chose to leave the vessel. My time was now growing precious, and I had no doubt the three days spoken of would be extended to as many weeks. I therefore went to the office of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, where, as I expected, every ticket had been taken weeks before, and neither love, money nor entreaty seemed likely to procure one. Mr. Robinson, the Agent, however, with a prompt kindness I shall not soon forget, gave me a passage to Mazatlan, with the understanding that I would have no berth and probably little sleeping-room.

The steamer was to sail on the first of January, at daybreak. After coming upon my friends like an apparition—they having supposed me to be far out at sea—I spent two days on shore, housed up from rain and mud, and finally took a boat for the steamer on the last evening of the year 1849. It was during the prevalence of the spring-tides, and no boat could be had to go from the Long Wharf to the anchorage off the Rincon, for less than \$4. I had two oarsmen for myself and blankets; it was near the middle of the ebb-tide, and we ran inside the shelter of the point till we were abreast of the steamer. She was now about three-quarters of a mile distant, but a foaming, raging flood was between us. Several large boats, manned by four and six oarsmen were struggling in the midst of the current, and borne away in spite of themselves. One of my men was discouraged, and wanted to turn back, but there was a majority against him. I took good hold of the tiller-ropes, the men stripped to their flannel shirts, planted their feet firmly against the ribs of the boat, and we dashed into the teeth of the tide. We were thrown and tossed about like a toy; the spray flew over us, and the strongest efforts of the men did not seem to move us an inch. After hal

an hour of hard work, during which we continually lost ground. we came alongside of a vessel and made fast. At least a dozen other craft could be seen struggling out after us, but they all fell away, some of them drifting two or three miles before they could make a halt. We lay for nearly two hours, waiting for the height of the ebb to pass, but the flood still foamed and rushed, dashing against the prows of vessels and boiling around their sterns, with an incessant roar. At last, another boat with two passengers came down upon us in the darkness; we joined crews, leaving one of the boats behind, and set out again with four oars. It was pitchy dark, with a rain dashing in our faces. We kept on, towards the light of the steamer, gaining about a yard a minute, till we reached her lee gangway.

I unrolled my blankets and put in a preëmption claim for one end of the cabin-table. Several other berthless persons occupied the benches on either hand and the iron grating below, which printed their sides like a checker-board; and so we passed the night. The last boat-loads came out in the morning; the parting gun echoed back from the Island of Yerba Buena; the paddles moved; San Francisco slid away from us, and the Golden Gate opened again; the swells of the Pacific rolled forward to meet us; the coast wheeled around and fronted our larboard side; rain and fog were behind us, and a speck of clear blue far ahead—and so we sped southward, to the tropics, and homeward!

The Oregon's freight, both of gold and passengers, was the most important which had ever left San Francisco. Of the former, we had about two millions of dollars on board; of the latter, the Congressmen and Senators elect, Col. Frémont, Dr. Gwin, Gilbert and Wright, together with a score of the prominent merchants and moneyed men of San Francisco, and several officers

of the Army and Navy. Mr. Butler King was returning from his survey of the country; Major Rucker, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the overland emigration, and Major Cross, recently from Oregon, were also on board. The character of our little community was very different from that which came up on the Panama; the steamer was under better regulations, and at meal-time, especially, there was no disgraceful exhibition of (for want of a better word) swinishness, such as I witnessed on the former boat. We had a mild and spring-like temperature during the trip, and blue skies, after doubling Cape Conception.

We touched at Santa Barbara on the third morning out. The night had been foggy, and we ran astray in the channel between the Island of Santa Rosa and the mainland, making the coast about twenty-five miles south of the town. I did not regret this, as it gave me an opportunity of seeing the point where the Coast Mountains come down to the sea, forming a narrow pass, which can only be traveled at low tide, between the precipice and the surf. It is generally known as the Rincon, or Corner—a common Spanish term for the jutting end of a mountain; in a Californian ballad (written before seeing the country,) I had made it the scene of an imaginary incident, giving the name of *Paso del Mar*—the Pass of the Sea—to the spot. I was delighted to find so near a correspondence between its crags of black rock, its breakers and reaches of spray-wet sand, and the previous picture in my imagination. The village of Santa Barbara is charmingly situated, on a warm slope above the roadstead, down to which stretch its fields of wheat and barley. Behind it, on a shelf of the mountain, stands the Mission, or Episcopal Residence of Santa Barbara, its white arched corridors and tall square towers brightly relieved against the pine forests in the distance. Above and beyond all, the Moun

tain of Santa Ynez lifts its bold and sterile ramparts, like an unscalable barrier against the inland.

We lay-to in the road for several hours, shipping supplies. The shore was so near that we could watch the vaqueros, as they galloped among the herds and flung their lariats over the horns of the doomed beeves. An immense whale lay stranded on the beach like the hull of some unlucky vessel. As we steamed down the coast, in the afternoon, we had a magnificent view of the snowy range which divides the rich vine-land of Los Angeles from the Tulare Plains. At daybreak the next morning we were in the harbor of San Diego, which was little changed since my visit in August; the hills were somewhat greener, and there were a few more tents pitched around the hide-houses. Thence away and down the rugged Peninsula—past the Bay of Sebastian Viscaino, the headland of San Lorenzo and the white deserts of sand that stretch far inland—around the jagged pyramids and hollow caverns of Cape San Lucas—beyond the dioramic glimpse of San José, and into the mouth of the Californian Gulf, where we were struck aback by a norther that strained our vessel's sinews and troubled the stomachs of the passengers. The next morning we groped about in the dark, hearing a breaker here and seeing a rock there, but the captain at last hit upon the right clue and ran us out of the maze into a gush of dazzling sunshine and tropic heat, which lay upon the islands and palmy shores of Mazatlan Harbor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MAZATLAN.

I TOOK leave of my friends and mess-mates, receiving many gloomy predictions and warnings of danger from the most of them, and went ashore with the captain, in the ship's boat. The water is very shallow, from within a mile of the landing, and abounds with rocks which rise nearly to the surface. Two of these are called The Turtles, from an incident which is told at the expense of an officer of the British Navy. He had just reached Mazatlan, and on his first visit to the shore, knowing that the waters contained turtle, had provided himself with rope and harpoon, and took his station in the bow of the boat. The men rowed for some time without interruption, but suddenly, at a whisper from the officer, backed their oars and awaited the throw. The harpoon was swung quickly to give it impetus; the water flew as it descended; "hit!" shouted the officer. And it *was* hit—so hard that the harpoon banged back again from the round face of the rock.

We landed on the beach, where we were instantly surrounded with the peons of the Custom House, in white shirts and pantaloons. The baggage was carried under the portico of an adobe house opposite the landing, where it was watched by one of the officials. Mr Mott, of Mazatlan, who came passenger in the Ore-

gon, was well-known to all the authorities of the place, and I found, after losing much time in getting a permit to have my luggage passed, that it had all been sent to his house without examination. My next care was to find a lodging-place. There was the *méson*, a sort of native caravanserai; the *Ballo àe Oro*, (Golden Ball,) a tavern after the Mexican fashion, which is comfortless enough; and finally the *Fonda de Canton*, a Chinese hotel, kept by Luën-Sing, one of the most portly and dignified of all the Celestials. His broad face, nearly equal in circumference to the gong which Chin-Ling, the waiter, beat three times a day at the door, beamed with a paternal regard for his customers. His oblique eyes, in spite of all their twinklings after the main chance, looked a good-natured content, and his capacious girth spoke too well of fat living to admit of a doubt about the quality of his table. There was no resisting the attractions of Luën-Sing's hotel, as advertised in his own person, and thither, accordingly, I went.

The place was overrun by our passengers, who nearly exhausted the supplies of eggs, milk and vegetables in the market. The *Fonda de Canton* was thronged; all the rooms were filled with tables, and gay groups, like children enjoying a holiday, were clustered in the palm-shaded court-yard. Chin-Ling could not half perform the commands; he was called from every side and scolded by everybody, but nothing could relax the gravity of his queer yellow face. The sun was intensely hot until near evening, and I made myself quite feverish by running after luggage, permits and passports. I was not sorry when the gun of the steamer, at dusk, signalized her departure, and I was left to the company and hospitalities of my friend Luën-Sing. After the monte players had closed their bank in one of the rooms and the customers had with-

drawn, Chin-Ling carried in a small cot and made me a very good bed, on which I slept nearly as soundly as if it had been soft plank.

I took a ramble about the city in the clear coolness of the morning. Its situation is very peculiar and beautiful. Built at the foot of a bold hill, it stands on the neck of a rocky, volcanic headland, fronting the sea on each side, so that part of the city looks up the Californian Gulf and part down the coast towards San Blas. The houses are stone, of a white, pink or cream-color, with heavy arched entrances and cool court-yards within. The contrast of their clear, bright fronts, with the feathery tops of the cocoa-palm, seen under a dazzling sky, gives the city a rich oriental character, reminding me of descriptions of Smyrna. The houses are mostly a single story in height, but in the principal street there are several magnificent buildings of two stories, with massive cornices and large balconied windows. The streets are clean and cheerful, and the principal shops are as large, showy and tastefully arranged as those of Paris or New York. At night, especially, when they are brilliantly lighted and all the doors and windows are opened, displaying the gaudy shawls, scarfs and sarapes within; when the whole population is out to enjoy the pleasant air, the men in their white shirts and the women in their bewitching rebosas; when some native band is playing, just far enough distant to drown the discordance; when the paper lanterns of the fruit-venders gleam at every corner, and the aristocratic señoritas smoke their paper cigars in the balconies above—Mazatlan is decidedly the gayest and liveliest little city on the Continent.

But I was speaking of my morning stroll. The sun was already shining hotly in the streets, and the mellow roar of the surf on the northern side of the promontory tempted my steps in that direc-

tion. I threaded the narrow alleys in the suburbs of the town lined with cactus hedges, behind which stood the thatched bamboo huts of the natives, exactly similar to those on the Isthmus. Gangs of men, naked to the waist, were at work, carrying on their heads large faggots of dye-wood, with which some of the vessels in the harbor were being freighted. I reached a shaded cove among the rocks, where I sat and looked out on the dark-blue expanse of the Gulf. The air was as transparent as crystal and the breakers rolled in with foam and delightful freshness, to bathe the shelly sand at my feet. Three craggy islands off the shore looked to be within gunshot, owing to the purity of the atmosphere, yet their scarred sides and ragged crests were clothed in the purple of distance. The region about the mouth of the Gulf of California enjoys an unvarying clearness of climate, to which there is probably no parallel on the earth. At Cape San Lucas, the rising and setting of a star is manifest to the naked eye. Two or three years frequently pass without a drop of rain. There is, however, a season of about a week's duration, occurring in some of the winter months, when the soil is kept continually moist from the atmosphere. Not a cloud is to be seen; the sun is apparently as bright as ever; yet a fine, gauzy film of moisture pervades the air, settles gradually on the surface of the earth and performs the service of rain.

I saw an interesting picture one evening, in front of the Theatre. A large band was stationed near the door, where they performed waltzes and polkas in excellent style—an idea no doubt derived from "Scudder's Balcony" or the gambling-hells of San Francisco. It had the effect, at least, to draw a dense crowd of the lower orders to the place, and increase the business of the traders in fruits and drinks. A military band, of trumpets alone, marched

up and down the principal street, blowing long blasts of piercing sound that affected one like the shock of an electro-galvanic battery. Soldiers were grouped around the door of the Theatre, with stacked arms, and the tables of dealers in fruit and provisions were angled along the walls. Over their braziers of charcoal simmered the pans of *manteca*, (lard,) near which stood piles of tortillas and dishes of fowl mixed with *chili colorado*, ready to be served up at a medio the plate. Bundles of sugar-cane were heaped upon the ground, and oranges, bananas, and other fruits spread upon mats beside which their owners sat. There were tables covered with porous earthen jars, containing cool and refreshing drinks made of orange juice, cocoa milk, barley flour, and other wholesome ingredients.

The market-place presents a most picturesque appearance, whether by day or night. It is a small square, on the steep side of the hill, reached by narrow alleys, in which are to be found all the articles most in demand by the lower classes—earthenware after the old Aztec fashion, flaming calicoes, sarapes, rebosas and broad Guayaquil sombreros. The place is filled with square, umbrella-like stands or canopies of palm-leaves, under which are spread on the ground all kinds of vegetables, fruit and grain that grow in the vicinity, to be had at low prices. Among the fruits I noticed a plump green berry, with a taste like a strawberry and gooseberry combined; they were called by the natives, *arellanes*. At night, the square was lighted by flaring lamps or torches of some resinous wood.

The proximity of California had increased in a striking manner the growth and activity of Mazatlan. Houses were going up in all parts of the towns, and the prices of articles in the shops were little below the San Francisco standard. At a tailoring establish

ment I was asked \$20 for a pair of Mexican calzoneros, and \$25 for a cloth traveling jacket—sums entirely above my reach. I purchased a good Panama hat for \$5, and retaining my suit of corduroy and shirt of blue flannel, set about hunting for a mule. There were about fifty emigrants in the place, who had come in a few days previous, from Durango ; but their animals had all been disposed of to the Mexican traders, at very low prices. I was directed to the *mésón*, where I found a number for sale, in the corral. The owners offered to sell me a *caballo sillado* (a saddled and bridled horse) for \$100, or a tolerable mule for \$80, but seemed to think I would prefer a *frisone*, (an American horse,) at \$100, unsaddled. After riding a number of mules around the corral, I made choice of a small brown one, for which \$45 was asked, but which I obtained for \$30. One of the emigrants sold me his saddle and bridle for \$5 ; I added a good lariat and blanket, and was thoroughly equipped for the journey.

It now remained to have my passport arranged, for which the signature of the President of the City Council was requisite. After a great deal of search, I found the proper place, where a sort of Alcalde, who was settling a dispute between two Indians, wrote a *visto*, and directed me to call on the President, Don Luis Abioli. This second visit cost me several hours, but at last I succeeded in discovering Don Luis, who was busily engaged behind the counter of his grocery store, in a little building near the market-place. He stopped weighing sugar to affix his signature to the passport, received my "*mil gracias !*" with a profound bow and turned again to his customers.

The emigrants expressed great astonishment at my fool-hardiness, as they termed it, in undertaking the journey through to Vera Cruz. These men, some of whom had come overland from

Chihuahua and some from Matamoras, insisted most strenuously that I should not start alone. The Mexicans, they said, were robbers, to a man ; one's life, even, was not safe among them, and their bitter hostility to Americans would subject me to continual insult. " Would you believe it ?" said a tall, raw-boned Yankee ; " they actually *rocked* us !" This gentle proceeding, I found, on further inquiry, had been occasioned by the emigrants breaking their contract with their guide. I therefore determined to follow the plan I had adopted in California, and to believe nothing that I had not seen with my own eyes. " I've traveled in the country, and I know all about it," was the remark with which I was constantly greeted ; " you'll very soon find that I was right." To escape from the annoyance of these counsels and warnings, I hastened my preparations, and was ready for departure on the second morning after my arrival.

Luën-Sing, who had traveled over the road once, as far as Tepic, told me I should find it toilsome but safe. The Celestials assisted me in packing my scanty luggage behind the saddle, and enjoined on me the promise of patronizing the *Fonda de Canton*, when I returned to Mazatlan. I took my final cup of chocolate on the old table in the corridor, had a last talk with Chin-Ling about the gold-diggings, shook hands with the whole yellow-faced, long-eyed crew, mounted my mule and started up the main street, in the breathless heat of a noonday sun. I doubled the corner of the hill, passing the *Plaza de Toros*, (an arena for bull-fights,) and the scattering huts of the suburbs, till I reached the *garita*, near the sea. Here, an officer of the customs, who was lounging in the shade, pointed out the road to the old Presidio of Mazatlan, which I took, feeling very warm, very lonely and a little dispirited at the ride of twelve hundred miles which lay before me.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TRAVEL IN THE TIERRA CALIENTE.

It was a cloudless noon. The sun burned down on the sand and quivering sea, and the three islands in the Gulf seemed vitrifying in the blue heat of the air. Riding slowly down to the arid level of a dried-up marsh, over which my path lay, I met an arriero, of whom I asked the distance to the Presidio. "*No llega hoy,*" said he ; "*la mula no anda nada ; es muy flojo* " (You'll not get there to-day ; your mule don't go at all ; " he's very lazy.") My heart misgave me for a moment, for his criticism of the mule was true ; but, seeing that my spur had as yet drawn no blood, I broke a stick from the thicket and belabored him with hand and foot. I passed a few plantations, with fenced fields, near the town, and afterwards took to the sandy chapparal near the sea.

The foliage of a tropical winter, on this coast, is not very attractive. There is a season when the growth is suspended—when the bud closes, the leaf falls and the bough gathers sap for a long time of splendid bloom. Only the glossy green of the lemon, mango and sycamore remains ; the rest of the wood takes a grayish cast from its many half-clothed boughs, among which rise the strange, gloomy pillars of the *cereus giganteus*, often more than forty feet in height. After making the circuit of a spacious bay I came to

a cluster of fishing huts on the shore, about three leagues from Mazatlan. Beyond these the road turned among low hills, covered with the gray, wintry woods, as far as eye could reach. Gaudy parrots flew screaming among the boughs ; large brown birds, with hooked bills sat musing by the road, and in the shady spots, I heard the tender coo of the dove—the sweet emblem of peace and domestic affection, to which no clime is alien—which haunts all lands and all zones, where beats the human heart whose softer emotions it typifies.

I was toiling along in the heat, torturing my conscience as much as the mule's flanks, when a couple of rancheros, riding behind me, came up with a good-humored greeting and proposed joining company. The foremost, a merry old native, of mixed blood, commenced using his whip on my mule's back and I soon found that the latter could keep up a sharp trot for an hour, without trouble. Thanks to my self-constituted *mozo*, I reached the banks of the Rio Mazatlan, opposite the Presidio, two hours before sunset. The old man invited me to pass the night at his ranche, which was near to hand, and I willingly complied. He turned his own beast loose, and started to a neighboring ranche, for an armful of *oja* (the fodder of maize) for my mule. Meanwhile, I walked down to the river, to refresh myself with a bath. The beauty of the scene kept me from the water for a long time. On the opposite bank the old walls of the Presidio towered above the trees ; the valley, stretching away to the eastward, to a far-off line of mountains, out of a notch in which the river found its way, was spotted with plantations of maize, bananas and melons. The rancheros were out at work, ploughing and sowing their grain. The fervor of the day was over, and a warm, tempered light was poured over the landscape. As I lay clasped in the

soft-flowing crystal of the river, the thought of another bath, on that very day four years before, came suddenly into my mind. It was my birth-day; but on that other anniversary I had baptized my limbs in the sparkling surf of the Mediterranean, on the shore of the Roman Campagna. I went back to the ranche with that sensation of half-pain, half-joy which we feel when the mind and body are in different places.

My mule was fed and the old man gave me a dish of frijoles, with three tortillas in lieu of knife and fork. Then we sat down in the delicious twilight, amid the beautiful repose of Nature, and I answered, as well as I could, the questions prompted by their simple curiosity. I told them about my country and its climate, and the long journey I must yet make to reach it, which they heard with evident interest and wonder. They were anxious to know how a steamboat could move against the wind, for they had been told this was the case, by their friends in Mazatlan. The nearest idea of it which I could give them, was by describing it as a *sea-cart*, with broad wheels rolling on the water. At last the twilight deepened into night, and I unrolled my blankets to make my bed. "You must sleep to-night *en el seréno*," said the old man; and a beautiful, star-lit *Seréno* it was. "Ah," said his wife, "what fine blankets! you will sleep better than the Archbishop!" They then went to their hammocks in the hut, and I lay down on the earth, thanking God that the dismal forebodings which accompanied me out of Mazatlan had been so happily falsified.

My kind host asked nothing in payment, when I saddled in the morning, but I insisted on giving him a trifle. "*Vaya con Dios!*" said he, as we shook hands, "and if you go to California bring me a little piece of gold when you come back." I forded

the river and passed through old Mazatlan—a miserable village of huts with a massive presidio and church in ruins. The morning was fresh and cool, and the road lay in shade for several miles. My mule, having no whip behind him, was as lazy as ever and made me the subject of remark from all the natives who passed. A *ranchero*, carrying an *escopette* and three live turkeys slung to the saddle, before him, offered his horse in exchange. I refused to trade, but an hour later, met an *arriero*, with a train of horses, laden with *oja*. He made the same proposition and unloaded the mountainous stack under which one of his horses was buried, that I might try him. "*Es muy caminador*," (a great traveler,) said the owner; but he was crooked-legged, sore-backed and terribly thin in withers and flanks. Looking at him in front, he seemed to have no breadth; he was like a horse carved out of plank, and I was almost afraid to mount, for fear I should pull him over. Nevertheless, he started off briskly; so without wasting words, I made an even exchange. Nothing was gained however, in point of dignity, for my brisk lean horse occasioned quite as many remarks as my fat lazy mule.

Towards noon I reached a little village called Santa Fe, where I got a breakfast of frijoles and chopped sausage, mixed with red-pepper—a dish called *chorisa*—for a real. The country I passed was hilly and barren, with a range of broken mountains between me and the sea. Crossing a ridge beyond Santa Fe, I came upon extensive fields of aloes, cultivated for the vinous drink called *mescal*, which is made of their juice. In the midst of them stood the adobe town of Agua Caliente—a neat though scattering place with a spacious church. I journeyed on for leagues in the burning sun, over scorched hills, without water or refreshing verdure. My *caminador*, too, lost the little spirit he had displayed, and

jogged along at a snail's pace. I suffered greatly from thirst for several hours, till I reached a broad arroyo crossing the road, where I found a little muddy water at the bottom of a hole. Some Indians who were seated in the shade, near a sort of camp-fire, put me on the right trail for Potrerillos, the village where I expected to pass the night. A pleasantly shaded path of a league took me thither by sunset.

My old native friend on the Rio Mazatlan told me I could stop wherever I chose, on the road; no *ranchero* would refuse to receive me. I accordingly rode up to the first house, and inquired; "Can I stay here to-night?" "*Si Señor*," was the ready answer. The place was small, and the people appeared impoverished, so I asked whether there was a *posada* in the place. "Go to Don [polito]," said the man; "that is where the *estranjeros* stay," Don Ipolito was a Frenchman, who had an adobe hut and corral for mules, in the centre of the village. He was about starting for Mazatlan, but gave directions to the women and *mozos* to furnish me with supper, and my horse with corn and *oja*. His instructions were promptly obeyed; I had a table set with *chorisa* and *frijoles*, under the thatched portico; then a cup of black coffee and a *puro*, which I enjoyed together, while trying to comprehend the talk of a very pretty girl of fifteen and a handsome young *ranchero*, evidently her lover, who sat near me on a low adobe wall. They were speaking of marriage—that I found at once. But another *ranchero*—perhaps a rival suitor—named Pio, formed their principal topic. "*Es sin vergüenza, Pio*" (He's a shameless fellow, that Pio,) was frequently repeated by both of them.

My bed-time was not long in coming. A boy was sent into the loft of the hut for a frame made of woven cane, which was placed

on the portico, and covered with a coarse matting I throw my blankets on it, using my coat for a pillow, and was sound asleep in five minutes. Half an hour might have elapsed, when I was suddenly aroused by a sound like the scream of a hundred fiends. The frame on which I lay was rocked to and fro, and came near overturning; I sprang up in alarm, finding my bed in the midst of a black, moving mass, from which came the horrid sound. It proved to be a legion of hogs, who had scented out a few grains of corn in a basket which had held my horse's feed, and was placed under the bed. The door of the hut opened, and the hostess appeared with a lamp. At sight of her, the beasts gave a hasty grunt, cleared the wall at one bound, and disappeared. "*Santa Maria!*" shrieked the woman; "*son demonios—son hijos del diablo!*" (they are demons—they are children of the devil!) I feared that another descent upon me would be made after she had gone back to her hammock; but I was not molested again.

I arose in the morning, fed my horse, saddled, and was off by sunrise. The town of El Rosario was but four leagues distant, and the road was full of young rancheros in their holiday dresses, riding thither to mass. Three of them joined company with me and tried to sell me one of their horses. "You'll never reach Tepic with that horse," said they, "look at ours!" and away they would gallop for a hundred yards, stopping with one bound, to wait for my slow-paced *caminador*. They drew out their tobacco and tinder-boxes, as we rode along; one of them, a spruce young fellow, with a green silk sash around his waist, rolled his *cigarito* in corn-husk, smoked about one-third of it and presented me with the remainder, that I might see how much better it tasted than paper. The flavor was indeed mild and delightful. I puffed away an inch of it, and then returned him the stump. A

naked boy, basking in the sun at the door of a hut, called out "Yanki!" as I passed.

El Rosario is built on a beautiful site, in a broad valley, surrounded by blue and jagged peaks. It has several streets of spacious stone houses, for the most part ruined, and a church with a fine stone tower a hundred and fifty feet in height. I had to cross the plaza, which was filled with the rancheros of the neighborhood, waiting for the hour of mass; my caminador was the subject of general notice, and I was truly rejoiced when I had hidden his raw bones from sight in the court-yard of a *fonda*. The house was kept by a good-natured old lady, and three large parrots, who, (the parrots) sat each on a different perch, continually repeating: "*chiquito perriquito, bonito, blanquito!*"—the only phrase I ever heard a Mexican parrot utter, and which may be thus translated: "very little, pretty little, white-little parrotling!" I ate my breakfast of beans and red-peppers, chatting the while with the old lady, who was loud in her praises of Tepic, whither I told her I was bound. "*Es mi pais,*" said she, "*es un pais precioso.*" She scolded me good-humoredly at starting, for having left my horse where he might have been stolen, and bade me beware of the robbers; but, thought I, who would take such a horse?

Crossing the river of Rosario, I took a path embowered in green thickets, through which glided multitudes of macaws and tufted birds of gay plumage. At noon I came into a lovely valley among the mountains, and followed a stream shaded by splendid sycamores and palms. Little patches of meadow land slept like still lakes among the woods, with thatched ranches spotting their shores. I rode up to one of these for a drink of water, which an old man brought me in a calabash, standing bare-headed till I had

finished drinking. The trails soon after scattered, and I found that I had lost the main road. In this emergency I met a rancho, who told me I had wandered far from the right track, but that he would act as guide. I promised him a reward, if he would accompany me, whereupon he ran to his hut for a lariat, caught a horse and sprang on his unsaddled back. We rode for more than two hours in a foot-path through the depths of the tangled forest, before striking the road. The impervious screen of foliage above our heads kept off the sun and turned the daylight into an emerald gloom. Taking leave of my guide, I emerged from these lonely and enchanting shades upon the burnt upland, where the tall fan-palms rustled drearily in the hot wind. As the afternoon wore away, another green level of billowy foliage appeared ahead ; the hills lay behind me, and far away to the right I saw the sea-blink along the edges of the sky.

Notwithstanding the unsurpassed fertility of soil and genial character of climate, this region is very scantily settled, except in the broad river-bottoms opening towards the sea. There, under the influence of a perpetual summer, the native race becomes indolent and careless of the future. Nature does everything for them ; a small patch of soil will produce enough maize and bananas for a family, with which, and the eternal frijoles, they have abundance for life's wants. The saplings of the woods furnish them with posts, rafters and ridge-poles, the palm and the cane with thatch and bedding. They are exempt from all trouble as to their subsistence ; the blue ramparts of the Sierra Madre on one side, and the silver streak of the sea on the other, enclose their world. They grow up lithe and agile in the free air, mate, wax old and die, making never a step out of the blind though contented round which their fathers walked before them. I do not believe

that a more docile or kindly-disposed people exists than these *rancheros*. In all my intercourse with them I was treated with unvarying honesty, and with a hospitality as sincere as it was courteous and respectful. During all my travels in the *Tierra Caliente*, I was never imposed upon as a stranger nor insulted as an American.

My resting-place the third night was the village of Escuinapa where I found a *mésou*, kept, or at least managed by a lady whose kindness and cheerfulness were exactly in proportion to her size, that is, they were about as broad as they were long. She was a fast friend of the Americans, and spoke with rapture of the promptness with which all the emigrants whom she had entertained, had paid their bills. Her own countrymen, she said, were slippery customers; they frequently ran off without paying a *claco*. She talked of going to California; she thought if she were to establish a *mésou* in the diggings, all the emigrants who had passed through Escuinapa would patronize her. "They are all good people," said she; "I like them as well as if they were my brothers, and I am sure they would come to visit me." An old man, who seemed to be her husband, sat swinging in the hammock, lifting his feet high enough that his blue velvet calzoneros should not be soiled on the floor. I had an excellent dinner of eggs, fish and chocolate, finishing with a delicate *cigarito* which the corpulent hostess prepared for me. Two or three Mexican travelers arrived for the night and took possession of the cane bed-frame and benches in the room, leaving me only the cold adobe floor. "Will you take out your saddle and bridle?" requested the old lady; "*los señores* are going to sleep here." "But where am I to sleep?" I asked. "*Con migo!*" was the immediate answer. "*Como?*" said I surprised and alarmed; I was horror-struck and must have looked

so, for she seemed amused at my bewilderment. "Come!" she replied, and took up the lamp. I shouldered the saddle, and followed to a dark, windowless closet, in the rear of the house. It was just large enough to hold two frames, covered with matting, and some bags of maize and barley. "This is your bed," said she, pointing to one of them, "and this is ours. I hope you do not object to our sleeping in the same room." I laid my saddle on the frame indicated, put my head on it, and slept soundly till the early dawn shone through the cracks of the door.

Leaving Escuinapa, a day's journey of fifty miles lay before me, through an uninhabited country. I doubted the powers of my *caminador*, but determined to let him have a fair trial; so I gave him a good feed of corn, drank a cup of chocolate, slung a pine-apple to my saddle-bow, and rode out of the village in the morning lusk. At first the trail led through pleasant woods, with here and there a rancho, but diverging more and more to the east, it finally came out on a sandy plain bordering the leagues of salt marsh on the side towards the sea. On the left the mountain chain of the Sierra Madre rose high and abrupt, showing in its natural buttresses and ramparts of rock a strong resemblance to the peaks of the Gila country. A spur of the chain ran out towards the sea, far in front, like the headland of a bay. The wide extent of salt marsh reaching from near El Rosario to La Bayona—a distance of seventy-five miles, showed the same recession of the Pacific, as I had already observed at Panama and Monterey. The ancient sea-margins may still be traced along the foot of the mountains.

I jogged steadily onward from sunrise till blazing noon, when, having accomplished about half the journey, I stopped under a palm-tree and let my horse crop a little grass, while I refreshed myself with the pine-apple. Not far off there was a single rancho.

called Piedra Gorda—a forlorn-looking place, where one cannot remain long without being tortured by the sand-flies. Beyond it, there is a natural dome of rock, twice the size of St. Peters, capping an isolated mountain. The broad intervals of meadow between the wastes of sand were covered with groves of the beautiful fan-palm, lifting their tufted tops against the pale violet of the distant mountains. In lightness, grace and exquisite symmetry, the Palm is a perfect type of the rare and sensuous expression of Beauty in the South. The first sight of the tree had nearly charmed me into disloyalty to my native Pine; but when the wind blew, and I heard the sharp, dry, metallic rustle of its leaves, I retained the old allegiance. The truest interpreter of Beauty is in the voice, and no tree has a voice like the Pine, modulated to a rhythmic accord with the subtlest flow of Fancy, touched with a human sympathy for the expression of Hope and Love and Sorrow, and sounding in an awful undertone, to the darkest excess of Passion.

Making the circuit of the bay, the road finally doubled the last mountain-cape, and plunged into dark green thickets, fragrant with blossoms. I pushed on hour after hour, the pace of my caminador gradually becoming slower, and sunset approached without any sign of “Bayona’s hold.” Two Indians, mounted on small horses, came down by a winding trail from the hills, and rode a little in advance of me. “*No tiene usted miedo de viajar solo?*” (Are you not afraid to travel alone?) said one of them. “What should I be afraid of?” I asked in return. “The robbers.” “I should like to see them;” I said. “*Tiene mucho valor,*” remarked one to the other. They then spoke of my tired horse, and looked admiringly at my blankets, asking me first to make a gift of them, then to sell them, and, finally, to let them carry

them behind their own saddles. I refused them very decidedly and they trotted in advance. At the next bend of the road, however, I saw through the trees that they waited till I nearly overtook them, when they slowly moved forward. The repetition of this roused my suspicions; taking off a heavy pair of gloves, I pulled out my pistol, put on a fresh cap, and kept it in my right hand. I believe they must have been watching my motions, for, instead of waiting as usual, they dashed off suddenly at a gallop.

The sun went down; the twilight faded, and the column of the zodiacal light shortened to the horizon, as I walked behind my caminador, looking for La Bayona. At last I came to a river, with two or three ranches on its banks; in front of them was a large fire, with several men standing about it. One of them offered to accompany me to the town, which was near. On the way, he expatiated on the great number of rabbits in the neighborhood, and lamented that he had no powder to shoot them, winding up with: "Perhaps, Señor, you might give me a little; you can easily buy more when you reach Acaponeta." I poured out half the contents of my flask into a corner of his shirt, which he held up to receive it; he then pointed out the fording-place, and I crossed to La Bayona, where my poor horse had rest and good feed after his hard day's journey. There was a dirty little *mésón* in the place, a bare room. In which was given me for two reales, and a supper of tortillas and frijoles for a medio (6½ cents.)

The landlord and one of his friends talked with me a long while about the United States. "Tell me," said the latter, "is it true what Don Carlos, an American that was here last spring, told me—that there is a machine in your country in which you look at the moon, and it seems to be twenty feet long?" I assured him it was perfectly true, for I had often seen the moon

in it. "Is it also true," he continued, "that in the United States a man pays only one dollar a year, and sends all his children to school for nothing?—and, then, when they have gone twelve years to school, they are fit for any business? Ah, how grand that is! how much better than here! Now, I do not know how to read at all. Why is it that everything is so fortunate in the United States?" "Because," said the other, "it is a nation *muy poderosa*." "I have heard that there are several millions of people in it." "That is true," rejoined the other, "and that is the reason why all the Americans we see are so much wiser than we are." I was deeply interested in their naïve remarks. In fact, not only here, but throughout all western Mexico, I found none of the hostility to Americans which had been predicted for me, but on the reverse, a decided partiality. In speaking of us, the natives exhibited (and I say it not with any feeling of national pride,) the liking which men bear to their superiors. They acknowledged our greater power and intelligence as a nation, without jealousy, and with an anticipation rather than a fear, that our rule will one day be extended over them.

The next morning I rode to Acaponeta, four leagues distant, by a pleasant road over low hills. The scenery was highly picturesque, the town lies in the lap of a wide valley, nearly encircled by mountains which rise one above another, the farthest still the highest, like the seats in an amphitheatre. Their sides are cloven by enormous chasms and ravines, whose gloom is concealed by perpetual verdure, but the walls of white rock, dropping sheer down many hundreds of feet from the summit, stand out distinctly in the vaporless atmosphere. Except the church and a few low adobe buildings around the plaza, Acaponeta is formed entirely of wane huts. I stopped at the *Meson del Angel*, gave a basket of

corn to my horse, and ordered eggs, beefsteak, and chocolate for breakfast. The *cocinera* and her daughter were two hours in preparing it, and meanwhile I sat in the shade of an orange tree, beside a cool well in the court-yard. The women were very talkative, and amused themselves greatly with my bad Spanish. The laughter was preparing a quantity of empty egg-shells for the Carnival, by filling them with finely-minced paper of different colors and sealing the ends again. In order to show me how these were used, they bade me take off my hat. Each then took an egg and approached me, saying, "*tu es mi bien amorado*,"—at the same time breaking the shells on my head. My hair was completely filled with their many-colored contents, and it was several days before it was clear of this testimony of affection.

I crossed another large river at Acaponeta, and went on through embowered paths,

"Under a shade perpetual, which never
Ray of the sun let in, nor moon.

Gay parrots and macaws glanced in and out amid the cool green shadows; lovely vistas opened between the boughs into the fairy heart of the wilderness; the trees were laced each to each, by vines each more luxuriant than themselves; subtle odors pervaded the air, and large, yellow, bell-shaped flowers swung on their long stems like cups of gold, tremulous in the chance rays of sunshine. Here and there, along the ledges of the mural mountains on my left, I noted the smoke of Indian camp-fires, which, as night approached, sparkled like beacons. I intended to have stopped at a ranche called San Miguel, but passed it unknowingly, and night found me on the road. A friendly *ranchero* pointed out to me a path which led to a hut, but I soon lost it, and wandered

about at random on the dark fenceless meadows. At last I heard a dog's bark—the sure sign of habitation—and, following the sound, came to a small ranche.

I was at once given permission to stay, and the women went to work on the tortillas for my supper. I swung off my fatigue in a hammock, and supped by starlight on the food of the Aztecs—the everlasting tortilla, which is a most nourishing and palatable cake when eaten fresh from the hot stone on which it is baked. There were several dogs about the ranche, and the biggest of them showed a relentless hostility towards me. “El Chucho don't like you,” said the ranchero; “he'll bite if he can get hold of you; you had better climb up there and sleep,” and he pointed to a sort of cane platform used for drying fruit, and raised on poles about twelve feet from the ground. I took my blankets, climbed up to the frail couch, and lay down under the stars, with Taurus at the zenith. El Chucho took his station below; as often as I turned on my airy bed during the night, the vile beast set up his howl and all the dog-herd howled in concert.

The next day I breakfasted at the hacienda of Buena Vista and rode about six leagues further, to the town of Rosa Morada. (The Violet Rose.) Just before reaching the place I caught sight of a mountain very far to the south, and recognized its outline as that of the *Silla de San Juan* (Saddle of St. John,) which rises behind the roadstead of San Blas. This was a welcome sight, for it marked the first step of my ascent to the Table-Land. I was growing tired of the Tierra Caliente; my face was blistered with the heat, and my skin so punctured by musquitos, fleas, sand-flies and venomous bugs that I resembled a patient in the last stage of small-pox. There was no *mésón* in Rosa Morada, but a miserable *posada*, where I found three Frenchmen, two of whom

were fresh from Bordeaux and on their way to California. They were all engaged about the kitchen fire, concocting their dinner which they invited me to share with them. The materials they picked up in the village were not slighted in the cooking, for better vermicelli I never ate. They likewise carried their beds with them and stretched their cot-frames on the airy portico. I lay down on the adobes and slept "like a brick."

I was off at daylight, riding over an elevated plain towards the Rio Santiago. Two arrieros, on their way to Tepic, shared their tortillas with me and proposed we should join company. They stopped two hours to noon, however, and I left them. Urging forward my despairing horse, I crossed one branch of the river at San Pedro and reached Santiago, on the main branch, an hour before sunset. In descending to the Rio Santiago—or, more properly, the Rio Toluotlan, its ancient Aztec appellation—I came upon plantations of bananas and plantains, heavy with ripening fruit. The country showed signs of wealth and culture; the houses were large and well built and the fields divided by strong fences of palm logs. All up and down the broad banks of the river were scattered arrieros, mules and rows of pack-saddles, while half a dozen large canoes were plying backwards and forwards with their loads. I got into the first vacant one with my saddle, bridle and blankets, taking a turn of the lariat round my horse's nose. An arriero who had passed me the day previous, with a horse as worn-out as my own, was the other passenger. The river is about sixty yards wide, and very deep and swift. Our horses swam bravely behind us, and I believe were much the better for the bath.

I took an instant liking to the arriero for two reasons: firstly he had a dark, melancholy, intellectual eye; secondly, he was the

only traveler I saw on the road, whose horse was so woeful an animal as mine. We started in company, and soon grew strongly attached. At dusk, we reached a village called Las Verritas. The inhabitants were all gone to Tepic, except an old man and a little boy who were selling *oja* to a company of mulattoes squatted around a fire in the middle of the street. Nothing was to be had to eat, except some cheeses which one of the latter carried in a wicker pack. I could get no tortillas for money, nor exactly for love, but compassion helped me. The wife of one of the men came quietly to me as I sat by my saddle, and slipping two tortillas into my hand, said in a whisper: "now, when you buy the cheese, you'll have something to eat with it." With a cheese for two reals, my sworn friend and I made a hearty supper. He did for me many kind little offices, with a sort of meek fidelity, that touched me exceedingly. After our meal was finished, he went into the woods and brought me a calabash of water, standing uncovered while I drank it. I lay upon the ground, but all the fleas in the village, who had been without sustenance for two days, pounced in upon me in swarms. Added to this, every exposed part of the body was attacked by legions of musquitos, so that, with such enemies without and within, I never passed a more terrible night.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ASCENT TO THE TABLE-LAND.

I WAS lying upon my back, with my handkerchief over my face, trying to imagine that I was asleep, when the welcome voice of the arriero shouted in my ear: "Ho! *Placero!* up and saddle!—the morning is coming and we must reach Tepic to-day." We fed our horses and sat on the ground for an hour before the first streak of dawn appeared. Three or four leagues of travel through a rich meadow-land brought us to the foot of the first ascent to the table-land. Our horses were fast failing, and we got off to walk up the stony trail. "I think we had better keep very close together," said my friend; "these woods are full of robbers, and they may attack us." Our path was fenced in by thorny thickets and tall clumps of cactus, and at every winding we were careful to have our arms in readiness. We climbed the first long ascent to a narrow plain, or shelf, from which we ascended again, finding always higher ridges above us. From the Abrevadero, a sort of inn or hospice standing alone in the woods, the hot, low country we left was visible nearly as far as Acaponeta; to one going towards Mazatlan, its dark-blue level might easily be mistaken for the sea. The Silla de San Juan was now to the west of us, and stood nearly five thousand feet in height. From the top of every

successive ridge we overlooked a great extent of country, broken and cloven in all downward directions by the agency of some pre-Adamite flood, yet inclosing in many sheltered valleys and basins spots of singular fertility and beauty, which are watered through whole year from the cisterns of the mountains. It was truly, as the old lady at El Rosario said, "*un pais precioso*."

We reached at noon a village called El Ingenio, about twelve leagues from Tepic. It lies in a warm valley planted with bananas and sugar-cane; the mountain streams are made to turn a number of mills, from which the place probably derives its name. Here the road from San Blas runs up through a narrow gorge and joins that from Mazatlan. We walked behind our horses all the afternoon, but as mine held out best, I gradually got ahead of the arriero. I halted several times for him to come up, but as he did not appear, I thought it advisable to push on to a good place of rest. My caminador had touched the bottom of his capability, and another day would have broken him down completely. Nevertheless, he had served me faithfully and performed miracles, considering his wasted condition. I drove him forward up ravines, buried in foliage and fragrant with blossoms; the golden globes of the oranges spangled the "embalméd darkness," as twilight settled on the mountains. Two leagues from Tepic, I reached the hacienda of La Meca, and quartered myself for the night. One of the rancheros wished to purchase my horse, and after some chaffering, I agreed to deliver him in Tepic for four dollars! The owner of the hacienda, on learning this, was greatly disappointed that I had not bargained with him, and urged me very strongly to break my word and sell him the horse for three dollars and a half! I told him I would not sell the animal for

eight dollars, after having made a bargain ; he was enraged at this but, as I could plainly see, respected me the more for it.

The young rancheros belonging to the hacienda amused themselves very much at my expense. A demon of fun seemed to possess them, and the simple sentences in my Spanish phrase-book excited them to yells of laughter. They were particularly curious to know my tastes and preferences, and on learning that I had never drank *mescal*, invited me to go with them and try it. We went down the road to a little hut, where a shelf with a bottle and two glasses upon it swinging under the thatched portico, signified "Liquor for Sale," to the passing arrieros. We entered and sat down among the family, who were at their scanty supper of rice and tortillas. The poor people offered me their own plates with a most genuine unsophisticated hospitality ; the rancheros told them whence I came, and they seemed anxious to learn something about my country. I tasted the *mescal*, which is stronger than brandy, and has a pungent oily flavor ; I should think its effects most pernicious if habitually drank. The people were curious to know about our Free School System of which they had heard by some means. None of them knew how to read, and they lamented most bitterly that education in Mexico was so difficult for their class. I was deeply touched by the exclamation of an old man, whose eyes trembled with tears as he spoke : " Ah, how beautiful thing it is to be able to read of God !" then adding, in a softened tone, as if speaking to himself : " but I cannot read—I cannot read." I found many such persons among those ignorant rancheros—men who were conscious of their inferiority and desired most earnestly to be enlightened and improved.

Tepic is built on the first plateau of the table-land, and about half-way between the Silla de San Juan and an extinct volcano

called San Guénguêy, which lifts its blackened brow high into the eastern sky. The plain, about fifteen miles in breadth, is for the most part moist meadow-land, threaded by several small streams. The city is girdled by pleasant gardens which hide everything from view on approaching, except the towers and dome of its cathedral. It is a solid well-built town of massive adobe houses mostly of one story, and divided by streets running at right angles. The general aspect of the place is dull and monotonous, with the exception of the plaza, which is one of the most beautiful in Mexico. A row of giant plane-trees runs around the four sides, shading the arched corridors of stone in which the traders display their fruits, trinkets, and articles of dress. There is an old stone fountain in the centre, around which, under canopies of grass-matting, are heaped piles of yellow bananas, creamy chirimoyas, oranges, and the scarlet, egg-like fruit of the Chinese pomegranate. All the gayety of the city seems to concentrate in the plaza, and, indeed, there is nothing else worth the traveler's notice, unless he is interested in manufactures—in which case he should visit the large cotton mills of Barron and Forbes in the vicinity. It is mainly through these mills that Tepic is known in the United States.

I had been directed to call at the posada of Doña Petra, but no one seemed to know the lady. Wandering about at random in the streets, I asked a boy to conduct me to some *mésón*. As I rode along, following him, a group of tailors sitting at a street-corner, sewing, called out: "Americano!" "*No tiene usted cuidado,*" said the boy, "*son mal criados*" (Don't mind them; they have bad manners.) I followed him into the court-yard of a large building, where I was received by the *patron*, who gave my done-over horse to the charge of the *mozo*, telling me I was just

in time for breakfast. My name was suddenly called from the opposite corridor; I turned about in surprise, and recognised the face of Mr. Jones of Guadalajara, whom I had met in Mazatlan. He had likewise just arrived, and was deep in the midst of a emptying salad and omelette, where I soon joined him. I had been in the house but a few minutes, when a heavy shower began and continued several hours without cessation; it was the first of the *cabañuelos*, a week of rainy weather, which comes in the middle of the dry season. The purchaser of my horse did not make his appearance, notwithstanding I was ready to fulfil my part of the bargain. As soon as the rain was over, I went the round of the different mésons, to procure another horse, and at last made choice of a little brown mustang that paced admirably, giving my *caminador* and twenty dollars for him. I made arrangements to leave Tepic the next morning, for the journey from Mazatlan had cost me eight days, and nine hundred miles still lay between me and Vera Cruz, where I was obliged to be on the 16th of February.

Leaving the méson on a bright Sunday noon, I left the city by the Guadalajara road. The plaza was full of people, all in spotless holiday dress; a part of the exercises were performed in the portals of the cathedral, thus turning the whole square into a place of worship. At the tingle of the bell, ten thousand persons dropped on their knees, repeating their *aves* with a light, murmuring sound, that chimed pleasantly with the bubbling of the fountain. I stopped my horse and took off my sombrero till the prayer was over. The scenery beyond Tepic is very picturesque; the road crosses the plateau on which the city is built, and rounds the foot of San Guënguëy, whose summit, riven into deep gulfs between its pinnacles of rock, was half-hidden in clouds as I passed. I came

into a pretty valley, surrounded on all sides by rugged hills; fields of cane and rice dotted its surface, but the soil was much less fertile than in the rich bottoms of the Tierra Caliente.

My *prieto*—the Mexican term for a dark-brown horse—paced finely, and carried me to the village of San Lionel, ten leagues from Tepic, two hours before nightfall. I placed him securely in the corral, deposited my saddle in an empty room, the key of which, weighing about four pounds, was given into my possession for the time being, and entered the kitchen. I found the entire household in a state of pleased anticipation; a little girl, with wings of red and white gauze, and hair very tightly twisted into ropy ringlets, sat on a chair near the door. In the middle of the little plaza, three rancheros, with scarfs of crimson and white silk suspended from their shoulders and immense tinsel crowns upon their heads, sat motionless on their horses, whose manes and tails were studded with rosettes of different colored paper and streamers of ribbons. These were, as I soon saw, part of the preparations for a sacred dramatic spectacle—a representation, sanctioned by the religious teachers of the people.

Against the wing-wall of the Hacienda del Mayo, which occupied one end of the plaza, was raised a platform, on which stood a table covered with scarlet cloth. A rude bower of cane-leaves, on one end of the platform, represented the manger of Bethlehem; while a cord, stretched from its top across the plaza to a hole in the front of the church, bore a large tinsel star, suspended by a hole in its centre. There was quite a crowd in the plaza, and very soon a procession appeared, coming up from the lower part of the village. The three kings took the lead; the Virgin mounted on an ass that gloried in a gilded saddle and rose-besprinkled mane and tail, followed them, led by the angel; and

several women, with curious masks of paper, brought up the rear. Two characters of the harlequin sort—one with a dog's head on his shoulders and the other a bald-headed friar, with a huge hat hanging on his back—played all sorts of antics for the diversion of the crowd. After making the circuit of the plaza, the Virgin was taken to the platform, and entered the manger. King Herod took his seat at the scarlet table, with an attendant in blue coat and red sash, whom I took to be his Prime Minister. The three kings remained on their horses in front of the church; but between them and the platform, under the string on which the star was to slide, walked two men in long white robes and blue hoods, with parchment folios in their hands. These were the Wise Men of the East, as one might readily know from their solemn air, and the mysterious glances which they cast towards all quarters of the heavens.

In a little while, a company of women on the platform, concealed behind a curtain, sang an angelic chorus to the tune of "O pescator dell'onda." At the proper moment, the Magi turned towards the platform, followed by the star, to which a string was conveniently attached, that it might be slid along the line. The three kings followed the star till it reached the manger, when they dismounted, and inquired for the sovereign whom it had led them to visit. They were invited upon the platform and introduced to Herod, as the only king; this did not seem to satisfy them, and, after some conversation, they retired. By this time the star had receded to the other end of the line, and commenced moving forward again, they following. The angel called them into the manger, where, upon their knees, they were shown a small wooden box, supposed to contain the sacred infant; they then retired, and the star brought them back no more. After this departure

King Herod declared himself greatly confused by what he had witnessed, and was very much afraid this newly-found king would weaken his power. Upon consultation with his Prime Minister the Massacre of the Innocents was decided upon, as the only means of security.

The angel, on hearing this, gave warning to the Virgin, who quickly got down from the platform, mounted her bespangled donkey and hurried off. Herod's Prime Minister directed all the children to be handed up for execution. A boy, in a ragged sarape, was caught and thrust forward; the Minister took him by the heels in spite of his kicking, and held his head on the table. The little brother and sister of the boy, thinking he was really to be decapitated, yelled at the top of their voices, in an agony of terror, which threw the crowd into a roar of laughter. King Herod brought down his sword with a whack on the table, and the Prime Minister, dipping his brush into a pot of white paint which stood before him, made a flaring cross on the boy's face. Several other boys were caught and served likewise; and, finally, the two harlequins, whose kicks and struggles nearly shook down the platform. The procession then went off up the hill, followed by the whole population of the village. All the evening there were fandangos in the méson, bonfires and rockets on the plaza, ringing of bells, and high mass in the church, with the accompaniment of two guitars, tinkling to lively polkas.

I left San Lionel early in the morning. The road, leaving the valley, entered the defiles of the mountains, crossing many a wild and rocky *barranca*. (A *barranca* nearly answers to the idea of our word "gulley," but is on a deeper and grander scale.) A beautiful species of pine already appeared, but in the warm hollows small plantations of bananas still flourished. I lost sight of San

Guënguëy, and after two hours of rough travel, came out on a mountain slope overlooking one of the most striking landscapes I ever beheld. In front, across a reach of high table-land, two lofty volcanic peaks rose far above the rim of the barren hills. To the left, away towards the east, extended a broad and lovely valley dotted with villages and the green shimmer of fields, and hemmed in on all sides by mountains that touched the clouds. These lofty ranges—some of which were covered with trees to the summit and some bleak and stony, despite their aerial hue of purple—make no abrupt transition from the bed of the valley: on the contrary, the latter seems to be formed by the gradual flattening of their bases. The whole scene wore a distinct, vaporless, amethyst tint, and the volcano of Zurubuco, though several leagues distant, showed every jag in the cold and silent lips of its crater.

I rode thirty miles, to the village of Santa Ysabel, before breakfasting, and still had twenty-one miles to Ahuacatlan, my stopping-place for the night. My road led down the beautiful valley, between fields of the *agave americana*. Sunset came on as I reached the foot of Zurubuco, and struck on a rocky path across a projecting spur. Here a most wonderful region opened before me. The pleasant valley disappeared, with everything that reminded me of life, and I was surrounded, as far as the vision extended, with the black waves of a lava sea. It was terrible as the gates of Tartarus—a wild, inexorable place, with no gleam of light on its chaotic features. The road was hewn with difficulty through the surgy crests of rock, which had stiffened to adamant, while tossing in their most tempestuous rage. The only thing like vegetation, was a tree with a red and bloated trunk, the bark of which peeled off in shreds,—apparently a sort of vegetable elephantiasis, as disgusting as the human specimens I saw on the Isthmus

I passed this region with a sensation bordering on fear, welcoming the dusky twilight of the shaded road beyond, and the bright moon under whose rays I entered Ahuacatlan.

At the *mésón* I found no one but the hostess and her two little sons; but the latter attended to my wants with a childish *ecourtesy*, and gravity withal, which were charming. The little fellows gave me the key to a room, saw my *priéto* properly cared for, and then sat down to entertain me till the tortillas were made and the eggs fried. They talked with much *naïveté* and a wisdom beyond their years. After supper they escorted me to my room, and took leave of me with. "*pasa ustè muy buena noche!*" I arose in the cloudless dawn, rode through the gay, spacious plaza of the village crossed another *barranca*, and reached Iztlan in time for breakfast. This is a beautiful place, embosomed in gardens, from the midst of which the church lifts its white tower. Beyond Iztlan, a delicious valley-picture lay before me. The dark red mountains bristling with rock, formed nearly an even circle, inclosing a bowl about ten miles in diameter. Further down their sides, the plantations of the agave, or aloe, made a belt of silvery gray, and deep in the fertile bosom of the plain, the gardens and orange groves, with sparkling glimpses of streams between the black loam, freshly ploughed, and the fields of young cane, of a pale golden green, basked in the full light of the sun. Far off, over the porphyry rim of the basin, a serrated volcanic peak stood up against the stainless blue of the sky. It was one of those rare chances in nature, when scenery, color, climate, and the sentiment of the spot, are in entire and exquisite harmony.

Leaving this valley, which was like a crystal or a piece of perfect enamel, buried in a region that Nature had left in the rough, I climbed a barren hill, which terminated at the brink of

the grand Barranca—a tremendous chasm, dividing two sections of the table-land. Two thousand feet below, at the level of the Tierra Caliente, lay a strip of Eden-like richness and beauty, but the mountains which walled it on both sides were dark, sterile and savage. Those opposite to me rose as far above the level of the ledge on which I stood, as their bases sank below it. Their appearance was indescribably grand; for the most perfect and sublime effect of a mountain is to be had neither from base nor summit, but a station midway between the two and separated from it. The road descending to Plan de Barranca, a little village at the bottom of the chasm, is built with great labor along the very verge of giddy precipices, or notched under the eaves of crags which threaten to topple down upon it. The ascent of the opposite steep is effected by a stony trail, barely large enough for two mules to pass, up the side of a wide crevice in the mountain-wall. Finally, the path appears to fail; the precipice falls sheer on one side; the bare crag rises on the other. But a sudden twist around the corner of a rock reveals a narrow cleft, terminating in the lower shelf of the table-land above. Looking back after I had scaled this, an *atajo* of mules which followed me, appeared to be emerging from the bowels of the earth. The road crossing the barranca is nearly fifteen miles in length. Large numbers of workmen are engaged in completing it for vehicles, and over the deepest chasm a bridge is being constructed by the State of Jalisco. Five years, however, is the shortest period named for the completion of the work, up to which time the barranca will remain impassable except for mules. The line of stages to Tepic, which is greatly demanded by the increase of travel, cannot therefore be perfected before that time; but Señor Zurutuza, the proprietor of the diligence lines, proposes opening a communication immediately

by means of a mule-post across the barranca. From Tepic to San Blas is but a day's journey, so that the chain of comfortable travel will then reach nearly from ocean to ocean.

My *prieto* began to feel the effects of the hard hills and thin air of the upper region, and I therefore stopped for the night at the inn of Mochitilte, an immense building, sitting alone like a fortress among the hills. The key of a large, cheerless room, daubed with attempts at fresco ornament, was given to me, and a supper served up in a cold and gloomy hall. The wind blew chill from the heights on either side, and I found *prieto's* blanket a welcome addition to my own, in the matter of bedding.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ROBBER REGION.

I SLEPT soundly in my frescoed chamber, fed *prieto*, and was off by sunrise. The road ascended the valley for several leagues, to the rim of the table-land, with high, barren mountains on either hand. Before crossing its edge I turned to look down into the basin I had left. A few streaks of dusky green varied its earthen hue; far off, in its very bottom, the front of the *mésen* of Mochitilte shone like a white speck in the sunrise, and the blue walls of the *barranca* filled up the farthest perspective. I now entered on a broad, barren plain, bordered by stony mountains and holding in its deepest part a shallow lake, which appeared to be fast drying in the sun. The scenery strikingly resembled that of some parts of California, towards the end of the rainy season.

The little town of Magdalena, where I breakfasted, sits beside the lake, at the foot of a glen through which the road again enters the hills. The waters of a clear stream trickle down through its streets and keep green the gardens of splendid orange-trees which gleam behind the gray adobe walls. At the *mésen* I gave *prieto* a sheaf of *oja* and two hours' rest before starting for the town of Tequila. "*No quiere usted tomar auxilio?—hay muchos ladrones en el camino;*" (Don't you want a guard?—the road is full of

robbers,) asked the vaquero of the house. "Every traveler," he continued, "takes a guard as far as Tequila, for which he pays each man a dollar." I told him I had no particular fear of the robbers, and would try it alone. "You are very courageous," he remarked, "but you will certainly be attacked unless you take me as an *ausilio*."

Soon after leaving the town I met a *conducta* of a hundred soldiers, escorting about fifty specie-laden mules. The officers were finely mounted, but the men, most of whom had broad, swarthy Indian faces, trudged along in the dust. Some of them greeted me with: "*Como va, paisano?*" some with "How do you do?" and others with a round English oath, but all imagining, apparently, that they had made the same salutation. As I was passing, a tawny individual, riding with one of the officers, turned about and addressed me in English. He was an American, who had been several years in the country, and was now on his way to California, concerning which he wanted some information. Notwithstanding he was bound to San Blas and had all his funds packed on one of the mules, he seemed still undecided whether to embark for San Francisco, and like most of the other emigrants I met, insisted strongly on my opinion as to the likelihood of *his* success. The road now entered a narrow pass, following the dry bed of a stream, whose channel was worn about twenty feet deep in the earth. Its many abrupt twists and windings afforded unequalled chances for the guerillas, especially as the pass was nearly three leagues in length, without a single habitation on the road. My friend, Lieutenant Beale, was chased by a party of robbers, in this very place, on his express journey across Mexico, in the summer of 1848. I did not meet with a single soul, although it was not later than the middle of the afternoon. The recent passing of the

conducta had probably frightened the robbers away from the vicinity.

After riding two hours in the hot afternoon sun, which shone down into the pass, a sudden turn disclosed to me a startling change of scenery. From the depths of the scorched hills, I came at once upon the edge of a bluff, several hundred feet high, down which the road wound in a steep and tortuous descent. Below and before me extended a plain of twenty miles in length, entirely covered with fields of the *maguey*. At my very feet lay the city of Tequila, so near that it seemed a stone might be thrown upon the square towers of its cathedral. The streets, the gardens, the housetops and the motley groups of the populace, were as completely unveiled to my observation as if Asmodeus had been my traveling companion. Around the plain, which now lay basking in the mellow light of the low sun, ran a circle of mural mountains, which, high and blue as they were, sank into nothing before the stupendous bulk of a black volcanic peak rising behind Tequila. The whole scene, with its warm empurpled hues, might have served, if not for the first circle of Dante's Paradise, at least for that part of Purgatory which lay next to it.

I rode down into the city, crossing several *arroyos*, which the floods gathered by the volcano had cut deeper into the plain. At the *Mèson de San José*—the only inn in the place—I found a large company of soldiers quartered for the night. The inner *patio* or courtyard, with its stables, well, and massive trough of hewn stone, was appropriated to their horses, and groups of swarthy privates, in dusty blue uniforms, filled the corridors. I obtained a dark room for myself, and a corner of one of the stalls for *prieto*, where I was obliged to watch until he had finished his corn, and keep off his military aggressors. The women were all absent, and I pro

cured a few tortillas and a cup of pepper-sauce, with some difficulty. The place looked bleak and cheerless after dark, and for this reason, rather than its cut-throat reputation, I made but a single stroll to the plaza, where a number of rancheros sat beside their piles of fruit and grain, in the light of smoky torches, hoisted on poles. The *mésón* was full of fleas, who seemed to relish my blood better than that of the soldiers, for I believe they all paid me a visit in the course of the night.

When I arose, the sun, just above the hills, was shining down the long street that led to Guadalajara. I had a journey of eighteen leagues to make, and it was time to be on the road; so, without feeding my horse, I saddled and rode away. A little more than four leagues across the plain, brought me to the town of Amatitlan; where, at a miserable mud building, dignified by the name of a *mésón*, I ordered breakfast, and a *mano de cja* for my horse. There was none in the house, but one of the neighbors began shelling a quantity of the ripe ears. When I came to pay, I gave her a Mexican dollar, which she soon brought back, saying that it had been pronounced counterfeit at a *tienda*, or shop, across the way. I then gave her another, which she returned, with the same story, after which I gave her a third, saying she must change it, for I would give her no more. The affairs of a few hours later caused me to remember and understand the meaning of this little circumstance. At the *tienda*, a number of fellows in greasy arapes were grouped, drinking mescal, which they offered me. I refused to join them: "*es la ultima vez*," (it is the last time,) said one of them, though what he meant, I did not then know.

It was about ten in the forenoon when I left Amatitlan. The road entered on a lonely range of hills, the pedestal of an abrupt spur standing out from the side of the volcano. The soil was

covered with stunted shrubs and a growth of long yellow grass I could see the way for half a league before and behind; there was no one in sight—not even a boy-arriero, with his two or three donkeys. I rode leisurely along, looking down into a deep ravine on my right and thinking to myself; “that is an excellent place for robbers to lie in wait; I think I had better load my pistol”—which I had fired off just before reaching Tequila. Scarcely had this thought passed through my mind, when a little bush beside the road seemed to rise up; I turned suddenly, and, in a breath, the two barrels of a musket were before me, so near and surely aimed, that I could almost see the bullets at the bottom. The weapon was held by a ferocious-looking native, dressed in a pink calico shirt and white pantaloons; on the other side of me stood a second, covering me with another double-barreled musket, and a little in the rear, appeared a third. I had walked like an unsuspecting mouse, into the very teeth of the trap laid for me.

“Down with your pistols!” cried the first, in a hurried whisper. So silently and suddenly had all this taken place, that I sat still a moment, hardly realizing my situation. “Down with your pistols and dismount!” was repeated, and this time the barrels came a little nearer my breast. Thus solicited, I threw down my single pistol—the more readily because it was harmless—and got off my horse. Having secured the pistol, the robbers went to the rear, never for a moment losing their aim. They then ordered me to lead my horse off the road, by a direction which they pointed out. We went down the side of the ravine for about a quarter of a mile to a patch of bushes and tall grass, out of view from the road, where they halted, one of them returning, apparently to keep watch. The others, deliberately levelling their pieces at me, commanded me to lie down on my face—“*la boca à tierra!*” I

cannot say that I felt alarmed: it had always been a part of my belief that the shadow of Death falls before him—that the man doomed to die by violence feels the chill before the blow has been struck. As I never felt more positively alive than at that moment, I judged my time had not yet come. I pulled off my coat and vest, at their command, and threw them on the grass, saying "Take what you want, but don't detain me long." The fellow . . . a pink calico shirt, who appeared to have some authority over the other two, picked up my coat, and, one after the other, turned all the pockets inside out. I felt a secret satisfaction at his blank look when he opened my purse and poured the few dollars it contained into a pouch he carried in his belt. "How is it," said he, "that you have no more money?" "I don't own much," I answered, "but there is quite enough for you." I had, in fact, barely sufficient in coin for a ride to Mexico, the most of my funds having been invested in a draft on that city. I believe I did not lose more than twenty-five dollars by this attack. "At least," I said to the robbers, "you'll not take the papers"—among which was my draft. "No," he replied, "*no me valen nada*." (They are worth nothing to me.)

Having searched my coat, he took a hunting-knife which I carried, (belonging, however, to Lieut. Beale,) examined the blade and point, placed his piece against a bush behind him and came up to me, saying, as he held the knife above my head: "Now put your hands behind you, and don't move, or I shall strike." The other then laid down his musket and advanced to bind me. They were evidently adepts in the art: all their movements were so carefully timed, that any resistance would have been against dangerous odds. I did not consider my loss sufficient to justify any desperate risk, and did as they commanded. With the end

of my horse's lariat, they bound my wrists firmly together and having me thus secure, sat down to finish their inspection more leisurely. My feelings during this proceeding were oddly heterogeneous—at one moment burning with rage and shame at having neglected the proper means of defence, and the next, ready to burst into a laugh at the decided novelty of my situation. My blanket having been spread on the grass, everything was emptied into it. The robbers had an eye for the curious and incomprehensible, as well as the useful. They spared all my letters, books and papers, but took my thermometer, compass and card-case, together with a number of drawing-pencils, some soap, (a thing the Mexicans never use,) and what few little articles of the toilette I carried with me. A bag hanging at my saddle-bow, containing ammunition, went at once, as well as a number of oranges and cigars in my pockets, the robbers leaving me *one* of the latter, as a sort of consolation for my loss.

Between Mazatlan and Tepic, I had carried a doubloon in the hollow of each foot, covered by the stocking. It was well they had been spent for *prieto*, for they would else have certainly been discovered. The villains unbuckled my spurs, jerked off my boots and examined the bottoms of my pantaloons, ungirthed the saddle and shook out the blankets, scratched the heavy guard of the bit to see whether it was silver, and then, apparently satisfied that they had made the most of me, tied everything together in a corner of my best blanket. "Now," said the leader, when this was done, "shall we take your horse?" This question was of course a mockery; but I thought I would try an experiment, and so answered in a very decided tone: "No; you shall not. I *must* have him; I am going to Guadalajara, and I cannot get there without him. Besides, he would not answer at all for your busi

ness." He made no reply, but took up his piece, which I noticed was a splendid article and in perfect order, walked a short distance towards the road, and made a signal to the third robber. Suddenly he came back, saying: "Perhaps you may get hungry before night—here is something to eat;" and with that he placed one of my oranges and half a dozen tortillas on the grass beside me. "*Mil gracias*," said I, "but how am I to eat without hands?" The other then coming up, he said, as they all three turned to leave me: "Now we are going; we have more to carry than we had before we met you; adios!" This was insulting—but there are instances under which an insult must be swallowed.

I waited till no more of them could be seen, and then turned to my horse, who stood quietly at the other end of the lariat. "Now, *prieto*," I asked, "how are we to get out of this scrape?" He said nothing, but I fancied I could detect an inclination to laugh in the twitching of his nether lip. However, I went to work at extricating myself—a difficult matter, as the rope was tied in several knots. After tugging a long time, I made a twist which the India-rubber man might have envied, and to the great danger of my spine, succeeded in forcing my body through my arms. Then, loosening the knots with my teeth, in half an hour I was free again. As I rode off, I saw the three robbers at some distance, on the other side of the ravine.

It is astonishing how light one feels after being robbed. A sensation of complete independence came over me; my horse, even, seemed to move more briskly, after being relieved of my blankets. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that this was a genuine adventure, worth one experience—that, perhaps, it was better to lose a few dollars than have even a robber's blood on my head; but it would not do. The sense of the outrage and

indignity was strongest, and my single desire was the unchristian one of revenge. It is easy to philosophize on imaginary premises, but actual experience is the best test of human nature. Once, it had been difficult for me to imagine the feeling that would prompt a man to take the life of another; now, it was clear enough. In spite of the threats of the robbers, I looked in their faces sufficiently to know them again, in whatever part of the world I might meet them. I recognized the leader—a thick-set, athletic man, with a short, black beard—as one of the persons I had seen lounging about the *tienda*, in Amatitlan, which explained the artifice that led me to display more money than was prudent. It was evidently a preconceived plan to plunder me at all hazards, since, coming from the Pacific, I might be supposed to carry a booty worth fighting for.

I rode on rapidly, over broad, barren hills, covered with patches of chapparal, and gashed with deep arroyos. These are the usual hiding-places of the robbers, and I kept a sharp look-out, inspecting every rock and clump of cactus with a peculiar interest. About three miles from the place of my encounter, I passed a spot where there had been a desperate assault eighteen months previous. The robbers came upon a camp of soldiers and traders in the night, and a fight ensued, in which eleven of the latter were killed. They lie buried by the road-side, with a few black crosses to mark the spot, while directly above them stands a rough gibbet, on which three of the robbers, who were afterwards taken, swing in chains. I confess to a decided feeling of satisfaction, when I saw that three, at least, had obtained their deserts. Their long black hair hung over their faces, their clothes were dropping in tatters, and their skeleton-bones protruded through the dry and shrunken flesh. The thin, pure air of the

able-land had prevented decomposition, and the vultures and buzzards had been kept off by the nearness of the bodies to the road. It is said, however, that neither wolves nor vultures will touch a dead Mexican, his flesh being always too highly seasoned by the red-pepper he has eaten. A large sign was fastened above this ghastly spectacle, with the words, in large letters: "AS CASTIGA LA LEY EL LADRON Y EL ASESINO." (Thus the law punishes the robber and the assassin.)

Towards the middle of the afternoon, I reached a military station called La Venta, seven leagues from Guadalajara. Thirty or forty idle soldiers were laughing and playing games in the shade. I rode up to the house and informed the officer of my loss, mentioning several circumstances by which the robbers might be identified; but the zealous functionary merely shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. A proper distribution of half the soldiers who lay idle in this guard-house, would have sufficed to make the road perfectly secure. I passed on, with a feeling of indignation against the country and its laws, and hurried my prieto, now nearly exhausted, over the dusty plain. I had ascended beyond the tropical heats, and, as night drew on, the temperature was fresh almost to chilliness. The robbers had taken my cravat and vest, and the cold wind of the mountains, blowing upon my bare neck gave me a violent nervous pain and toothache, which was worse than the loss of my money. Prieto panted and halted with fatigue, for he had already traveled fifty miles; but I was obliged to reach Guadalajara, and by plying a stick in lieu of the abstracted spur, kept him to his pace. At dusk I passed through Sapopa, a small village, containing a splendid monastery, belonging to the monks of the order of Guadalupe. Beyond it, I overtook, in the moonlight, the family of a

ranchero, jogging along on their mules and repeating paternosters whether for protection against robbers or cholera, I could not tell. The plain was crossed by deep, water-worn arroyos, over which the road was bridged. An hour and a half of this bleak, ghostly travel brought me to the suburbs of Guadalajara—greatly to the relief of *priéto*, for he began to stagger, and I believe could not have carried me a mile further.

I was riding at random among the dark adobe houses, when an old padre, in black cassock and immense shovel-hat, accosted me. "*Estrangero?*" he inquired; "*Si, padre,*" said I. "But," he continued, "do you know that it is very dangerous to be here alone?" Several persons who were passing, stopped near us, out of curiosity. "Begone!" said he, "what business have you to stop and listen to us?"—then, dropping his voice to a whisper, he added: "Guadalajara is full of robbers; you must be careful how you wander about after night; do you know where to go?" I answered in the negative. "Then," said he, "go to the *Mésón de la Mercéd*; they are honest people there, and you will be perfectly safe; come with me and I'll show you the way." I followed him for some distance, till we were near the place, when he put me in the care of "*Ave Maria Santissima,*" and left. I found the house without difficulty, and rode into the court-yard. The people, who seemed truly honest, sympathized sincerely for my mishap, and thought it a great marvel that my life had been spared. For myself, when I lay down on the tiled floor to pass another night of sleepless martyrdom to fleas and the toothache, I involuntarily said, with a slight variation of Touchstone's sage reflection: "Aye, now I am in Guadalajara; the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place; but travelers must be content."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THREE DAYS IN GUADALAJARA.

WHEN I got off my horse at the Méson de la Mercéd, I told the host and the keeper of the *fonda* that I had been robbed, that I had no money, and did not expect to have any for two or three days. “*No hace nada*,” said they, “you may stay as long as you like.” So they gave my horse a sheaf of *oja* and myself a supper of tortillas and pepper-sauce. The old lady who kept the *fonda* was of half-Castilian blood, and possessed all the courtesy of her white ancestors, with the quickness and vivacity of the Indian. She was never tired of talking to me about the strangers who had stopped at the méson,—especially of one whom she called Don Julio, who, knowing little Spanish, frequently accosted her as “mule!” or “donkey!” for want of some other word. She would mimic him with great apparent delight. She had three daughters—Felipa, Mariquita and Concepcion—of whom the two former were very beautiful. They were employed in the manufacture of rebosas, and being quite skilful in tending the machines, earned a dollar a day—a considerable sum for Mexico. Concepcion was married, and had a son named Zenobio—a very handsome, sprightly little fellow, with dark, humid, lustrous eyes. The circumstance of my remembering and calling each one by

name, seemed to please them highly, and always at meal-time they gathered around the table, asking me innumerable questions about my country and my travels.

My first move next morning was to find the Diligence Office. I went into the main plaza, which is a beautiful square, shaded by orange trees, and flanked on two sides by the picturesque front of the Cathedral and the Government Palace. As I was passing the latter building, one of the sentinels hailed me. Supposing it to be meant in derision, I paid no attention to it, but presently a sergeant, accompanied by two men, came after me. One of the latter accosted me in English, saying that it was so long since he had seen an American, he hoped I would stop and talk with him. He was a Scotchman, who for some reason had enlisted for a year and had already served about half of his time. He complained bitterly of the bad treatment of the men, who, according to his story, were frequently on the point of starvation. The Mexican soldiers are not furnished with rations, but paid a small sum daily, on which they support themselves. As the supplies from headquarters are very irregular, and a system of appropriation is practised by all the officers through whose hands they must come, the men are sometimes without food for a day or two, and never receive more than is barely sufficient for their wants. The poor Scotchman was heartily sick of his situation and told me he would have deserted long before, only that he had no other clothes in which to disguise himself.

At the office of the Diligence, I found the *administrador*, Don Lorenzo del Castaño, to whom I related my story and showed my draft. "*Es superior*," said he, after examining it, and then told me to call the next morning, as he would see a merchant in the meantime who, he was sure, would pay me the amount. Drafts

on the city of Mexico were at a premium of two per cent. and he had no difficulty in getting it accepted. The money, however, was paid to me in quarter-dollars, reals and medios, which it took me more than an hour to count. I went back to the office, with a heavy canvas-bag in each pocket, paid all the money to the administrador, who gave me a ticket for the next stage to Mexico, and an order for the residue on all the agents of the line. By exhibiting these orders at the different stopping-places on the road, the traveler receives credit for all his expenses, the amount at each place being endorsed at the bottom, and the remainder, if any, paid on his arrival at Mexico. By this means, he is saved the necessity of taking any money with him, and may verify the old Latin proverb by whistling in the face of the robber. I was thus led, perforce, to give up my original plan of traveling on horseback to Mexico, by way of Lake Chapala, Zamora, the ancient city of Morelia and the valley of Toluca. This route offered less of general interest than that of Lagos and Guanajuato, but had the attraction of being little traveled by strangers and little known. Perhaps I lost nothing by the change, for the hills near Zamora are robber-ground, and I had no desire to look into the barrels of three or four leveled muskets a second time.

I found Guadalajara in a state of terror and prayers. For a month previous the inhabitants had been expecting the arrival of the Cholera, now that its ravages in Durango and Zacatecas were over. The city authorities were doing everything in their power to hasten its approach, by prohibiting all public amusements and instituting solemn religious festivals. The Cathedral was at all times crowded with worshippers, the Host frequently carried through the streets, gunpowder burned and rockets sent up to propitiate the Virgin. As yet no case had been reported in the

city, though there were rumors of several in the neighboring villages. The convicts were brought out every morning in long gangs, chained together, each man carrying a broom made of small twigs. Commencing with the centre of the city, they were kept sweeping the whole day, till all the principal streets were left without a particle of dust or filth. The clanking of their fetters was constantly heard in some part of the city; the officers who walked behind them carried short whips, with which they occasionally went up and down the lines, giving each man a blow. This daily degradation and abuse of criminals was cruel and repulsive. The men, low and debased as they were, could not have been entirely devoid of shame, the existence of which always renders reclamation possible; but familiarity with ignominy soon breeds a hardened indifference which meets the pride of honesty with an equal pride of evil.

Guadalajara is considered the most beautiful city in Mexico. Seated on a shelf of the table-land, between three and four thousand feet above the sea, it enjoys a milder climate than the capital, and while its buildings lack very little of the magnificence of the latter, its streets are a model of cleanliness and order. The block fronting on the north side of the plaza, is a single solid edifice of stone, called the *Cortal*, with a broad corridor, supported on stone arches, running around it. The adjoining block is built on the same plan, and occupied entirely by shops of all kinds. Shielded alike from rain and sun, it is a favorite promenade, and always wears a gay and busy aspect. The intervals between the pillars, next the street, are filled with cases of toys, pictures, gilt images of saints, or gaudy slippers, sarapes and rebosas. Here the rancheros may be seen in abundance, buying ornaments for the next festivals. Vendors of fruit sit at the corners, their mats filled with fragrant and

gleaming pyramids, and the long shelves of cool barley-water and *tepache*, ranged in glasses of alternate white and purple, attract the thirsty idler. Here and there a group is gathered around a placard pasted on the wall—some religious edict of the cholera-fearing authorities, a list of the fortunate tickets in the last lottery, or the advertisement of a magnificent cock-fight that is to come off in the old town of Uruapan. The bulletin at the lottery-office is always surrounded; rancheros, housemaids, padres and robbers come up, pull out their tickets from under their cassocks and dirty sarapes, compare the numbers and walk away with the most complete indifference at their ill luck. The shops belonging to different trades are always open; tailors and shoemakers frequently sit in groups in the open corridor, with their work on their knees, undisturbed by the crowds that pass to and fro. I spent several hours daily in the *cortal*, never tiring of the picturesque life it exhibited.

It is remarkable how soon a man's misfortunes are made public. The second day of my stay in Guadalajara, I believe I was known to most of the inhabitants as "the American who was robbed." This, together with my rugged and dusty suit of clothing, (what was left of it,) made me the subject of general notice; so, after selling my draft, I hastened to disguise myself in a white shirt and a pair of Mexican pantaloons. One benefit of this notoriety was, that it was the means of my becoming acquainted with two or three American residents, and through them, with several intelligent and agreeable citizens. I never entered a place under such woful auspices, nor passed the time of my stay more delightfully. In walking about the streets I was often hailed with the word "*uistli!*" by some of the lower class. From the sound I thought it might possibly be an old Aztec word of salutation; but one day I met a

man, who, as he said it, held up a bottle of mescal, and I saw at once that he meant *whiskey*. The fact that it was constantly repeated to me as an American, gave rather a curious inference as to the habits of the emigrants who had passed through the city before me.

The appearance of Guadalajara on Sunday morning was very cheerful and beautiful. Everybody was in the streets, though not more than half the shops were closed ; the bells rang at intervals from the cathedral and different churches ; the rancheros flocked in from the country, the men in snow-white shirts and blue calzoneros, the women in their best rebosas and petticoats of some gay color ; and the city, clean swept by the convicts, and flooded with warm sunshine, seemed to give itself up truly to a holiday. I walked down along the banks of the little river which divides it into two unequal parts. The pink towers of the Bishop's Palace rose lightly in the air ; up a long street, the gateway of the Convent of San Francisco stood relieved against a shaded court-yard ; the palms in some of the near gardens rustled in a slow breeze, but the dark shafts of the cypress were silent and immovable. Along the parapets of the bridges, the rancheros displayed their fagots of sugar-cane and bunches of bananas, chatting gaily with each other, and with their neighbors who passed by on mules or asses. I visited most of the churches during the time of service. Many of them are spacious and might be made impressive, but they are all disfigured by a tawdry and tasteless style of ornament, a profusion of glaring paint and gilding, ghastly statues, and shocking pictures. The church of the Convent of San Francisco is partly an exception to this censure ; in a sort of loggia it has a large painting of the Last Supper, by a Mexican artist, which is truly a work of great beauty. In the body of the church are several un-

doubted originals by Murillo, though not of his best period ; I did not see them. The cathedral, more majestic in proportion, is likewise more simple and severe in its details ; its double row of columns, forming three aisles, the central one supporting a low dome, have a grand effect when viewed from the entrance. It ~~was~~ constantly filled with worshippers, most of whom were driven thither by the approach of the cholera. Even in passing its door, as they crossed the plaza, the inhabitants uncovered or made the sign of the cross—an extent of devotion which I never witnessed out of Mexico.

I found great source for amusement in the carriages collected near the doors during mass-hour. They were all the manufacture of the country, and the most of them dated from the last century. The running works were of immense size, the four wheels sustaining a massive and elaborately carved frame, rising five or six feet from the ground, and about twelve feet in length. In the centre of this, suspended in some miraculous manner, hung a large wooden globe, with a door in each side—a veritable Noah's Ark in form and solidity, and capable of concealing a whole family (and the Mexican families are always large) in its hollow maw. These machines were frequently made still more ridiculous by the pair of dwarfed, starved mules, hitched to the tongue, so far in advance that they seemed to be running away from the mountain which pursued and was about to overwhelm them. I concluded, however, after some reflection, that they were peculiarly adapted to the country. In case of revolution they would be not only bullet but bomb proof, and as there are no good roads among the mountains, they would roll from top to bottom, or shoot off a precipice, without danger to the family within. There are several extensive carriage manufactories in Guadalajara, but the modern

fabrics more nearly resemble those of our own cities, retaining only the heavy, carved frame-work, on which the body rests.

In the afternoon I went with some friends to make a *paseo* or the Alameda. This is a beautiful square on the border of the city, shaded with fine trees, and traversed by pleasant walks, radiating from fountains in the centre. It is surrounded by a hedge of roses, which bloom throughout the whole year, covering with a fragrant shade the long stone benches on which the citizens repose, Don and ranchero mingled together, smoking their puros and cigaritos. The drive is around the outside of the Alameda; I saw but a small part of the fashion of Guadalajara, as most of the families were remaining at home to invite the cholera. There were some handsome turn-outs, and quite a number of splendid horses, ridden in the Mexican style, which is perfection itself—horse and rider moving as one creature, and having, apparently, but one soul. The Mexican horses are all sprung from the Arabic and Andalusian stock introduced into the country by Cortez, and those large bands which run wild on the plains of San Joaquin and in the Camanche country, probably differ but slightly from the Arab horse of the present day.

A still more beautiful scene awaited us in the evening. The *paseo* is then transferred to the plaza, and all the fashionable population appears on foot—a custom which I found in no other Mexican city. I went there at nine o'clock. The full moon was shining down over the cathedral towers; the plaza was almost as distinct as by day, except that the shadows were deeper; the white arches and pillars of the *cortal* were defined brilliantly against the black gloom of the corridor, and the rows of orange trees, with their leaves glittering in the moonlight, gave out a rare and exquisite odor from their hidden blossoms. We sat down or

one of the benches, so near the throng of promenaders passing around the plaza, that their dresses brushed our feet. The ladies were in full dress, with their heads uncovered, and there were many specimens of tropic beauty among them. The faint clear olive of their complexion, like a warm sunset-light on alabaster—the deep, dark, languishing eye, with the full drooping lid that would fain conceal its fire—the ripe voluptuous lip—the dark hair whose silky waves would have touched the ground had they been unbound—and the pliant grace and fullness of the form, formed together a type of beauty, which a little queenly ambition would have moulded into a living Cleopatra. A German band in front of the cathedral played “God save the King” and some of the melodies of the Fatherland. About ten o’clock, the throng began to disperse; we sat nearly an hour longer, enjoying the delicious moonlight, coolness and fragrance, and when I lay down again on the tiles, so far from thinking of Touchstone, I felt glad and grateful for having seen Guadalajara.

Among the Guadalajarans I met was Don Ramon Luna, a gentleman of great intelligence and refinement. His father emigrated from Spain as a soldier in the ranks, but by prudence, energy, and native talent, succeeded in amassing a large fortune. Don Ramon spoke English and French with great fluency, and was, moreover, very enthusiastic on the subject of Mexican antiquities. At his ranche, a few leagues from Guadalajara, he had, as he informed me, a large number of ancient idols and fossil remains, which the workmen had collected by his order. I regretted that the shortness of my stay did not permit me to call on Padre Hajar, of the Convent del Carmen, who formerly resided in Philadelphia, and published a very able work on the Otomai language.

The diligence was to start on Monday. On Saturday afternoon

I sold my horse to a sort of trader living in the *mésón*, for seven dollars, as he was somewhat worn out, and horses were cheap in Guadalajara. The parting with my good hosts the next day was rather more difficult, and I was obliged to make a positive promise of return within three years, before they would consent that I should go. After I had obtained some money and paid them for my board, the old lady told me that thenceforth she would only charge half-price for every meal I chose to take in her house. "Thanks to the Supreme King," said she, "I have not been so much in need that I should treat friends and strangers both alike." After this, I only paid a *medio* for my dinner of eggs, frijoles, *lantecas* and *chili colorado*. On Sunday night I rolled up my few possessions in my *sarape*, took leave of the family and went to the *Casa de Diligencias* to spend the night. The old hostess threw her arms around me and gave me a hearty embrace, and the three daughters followed her example. I did not dislike this expression of friendship and regret, for they were quite beautiful. As I went down the court-yard, the voice of the mother followed me: "Go with Ave Maria Purísima, and do not forget Maria de la Ascension Hidalgo!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN THE DILIGENCE TO GUANAJUATO

THE mozo awoke me shortly after three o'clock, and before I had finished dressing, brought me a cup of foaming chocolate and a biscuit. The only other passenger was a student from Tepic, on his return to college, in Mexico. The stage already waited for us, and we had no sooner taken our seats on the leather cushions, than "*vamonos!*" cried the driver, the whip cracked and the wheels thundered along the silent, moonlit streets. The morning was chill, and there was little in the dim glimpses of adobe walls and blank fields on either hand, to interest us; so we lay back in the corners and took another nap.

The style of diligence travel in Mexico is preferable to that of any other country. The passenger is waked at three o'clock in the morning, has a cup of chocolate brought him, (and no one has drank chocolate who has not drank it there) takes his seat, and has nearly reached the end of the second post by sunrise. The heavy stage, of Troy manufacture, is drawn by six horses, four leaders abreast, who go at a dashing gallop as long as the road is level. About eleven o'clock a breakfast of six or eight courses is served up in good style, the coachman waiting until the last man has leisurely finished. There is no twanging of the horn and cry of

"All ready!" before one has bolted the first mouthful. Off again, there is no stoppage till the day's journey is over, which is generally about four o'clock, allowing ample time for a long walk and sight-seeing before dinner.

The second post brought us to the Rio Santiago, which I had crossed once between Mazatlan and Tepic. We got out to look at the old stone bridge and the mist of a cataract that rose above the banks, two or three hundred yards below. Our road lay across broad, stony tracts of country, diversified by patches of cactus; in the distance, the mountain parapet of a still higher table-land was to be seen. The third post, thirty miles from Guadalajara, was at the village of Zapotlanejo, where the cholera had already appeared. The groom who assisted in harnessing our fresh horses, informed us that twenty persons had died of it. The place looked quiet and half-deserted; many of the houses were studded with little wooden crosses, stuck into the chinks of the adobes. The village of Tepatitlan, which we passed during the forenoon, was likewise a cholera locality. We dashed through it and over a bare, bleak upland, many leagues in width, in the middle of which stood the Rancho de la Tierra Colorada, (Ranche of the Red Earth) our breakfast-place.

During the afternoon we crossed a very rough and stony baranca. The chasm at the bottom was spanned by a fine bridge, and eight cream-colored mules were in readiness to take us up the ascent. Even after reaching the level, the road was terribly rough and the bounds which our stage made as it whirled along, threatened to disjoint every limb in our bodies. I received a stunning blow on the crown of my head, from being thrown up violently against the roof. We were truly rejoiced when, late in the afternoon, we saw the little town of San Miguel before us, in a hollow

dip of the plain. We finished a ride of ninety miles as we drove into it, and found the stage from Lagos already before the hotel. The town did not boast a single "sight," so my companion and I took a siesta until dinner was announced.

The next morning our route lay over the dreary table-land, avoiding the many chasms and barrancas with which its surface was scamed: often running upon a narrow ridge, with a gaping hollow on each side. The rancheros were ploughing in some places, but the greater part of the soil seemed to be given up to pasturage. The fields were divided by walls of stone, but frequently, in the little villages, a species of cactus had been planted so as to form gardens and corrals, its straight, single pillars standing side by side, to the height of ten feet, with scarcely a crevice between. The people we met, were more hale and ruddy in their appearance than those of the Tierra Caliente. As they galloped alongside the stage, with their hats off, speaking with the driver, I thought I had never seen more lightly and strongly made forms, or more perfect teeth. When they laughed, their mouths seemed to blaze with the sparkling white rows exhibited. Towards noon, we saw, far ahead, the tops of two towers, that appeared to rise out of the earth. They belonged to the church of San Juan de Los Lagos, the place of the great Annual Fair of Mexico—a city of five thousand inhabitants, built at the bottom of a deep circular basin, whose rim is only broken on one side by a gash which lets out the waters it collects in the rainy season. Seen from the edge of the basin, just before you commence the descent, a more fantastic picture could scarcely be imagined. The towers of the church are among the tallest in Mexico. During the Fair, the basin is filled to its brim, and a tent-city, containing from three hundred thousand to half a million inhabitants, is

planted in it From Sonora to Oajaca, all Mexico is there, with a good representation from Santa Fé, Texas and California. We descended by a zigzag road, of splendid masonry, crossed the gully at the bottom by a superb bridge, and stopped at the Diligence Hotel for breakfast. The town was at prayers, on account of cholera. Five hundred people had already died, and the epidemic was just beginning to abate. I saw several of the ignorant populace issue from their huts on their knees, and thus climb their painful way up the hill to the cathedral, saying paternosters as they went. Two attendants went before, spreading sarapes on the stones, to save their knees, and taking 'hem up after they had passed. We ate a hearty breakfast in spite of the terror around us, and resuming our seats in the diligence, were whirled over hill and plain till we saw the beautiful churches of Lagos in the distance. At the hotel, we found the stage from Zacatecas just in, bringing passengers for Mexico.

I took an afternoon stroll through Lagos, visiting the market-place and principal churches, but found nothing worthy of particular note. We arose in the moonlight, chocoled in the *comedor*, or dining-hall, and took our seats—seven in all—in the diligence. We speedily left the neat, gay and pleasant city behind us, and began a journey which promised to be similar to that of the two preceding days—a view of barren table-land, covered with stone fences and cactus hedges, on either side, and blue mountains ever in far perspective. With the sun, however, things looked more cheerful, and soon after entering on the third post, we climbed a stony *cerro*, from which opened a splendid view of the Valley of Leon. Far as the vision extended, the effect was still heightened by a veil of thin blue vapor which arose from the broad leagues of field and meadow below us. In the centre of the picture rose the

spires of Villa de Leon, from the midst of green barley-fields and gardens of fruit trees. To the eastward, beyond the valley—which to the south melted into the sky without a barrier—ran the high and rocky ranges of the mineral mountains of Guanajuato. We had nearly crossed the table-land of the Pacific side of Mexico, and these hills were spurs from the spinal ridge of the Continent.

Our horses galloped into Leon—a large and lively town, which pleased me much better than Lagos. We had a capital breakfast of eight courses in the hall of the *Sociedad del Comercio*, and took in two fresh passengers, which just filled the diligence. Dashing out of the town, the road led over the level plain, between fields and gardens of great fertility. In the soft morning light, the animation and beauty of the scene were delightful. The peons were everywhere at work in the fields, watering the trees and vegetables from wells, out of which they drew the water with long poles. At a bridge over the dry bed of a river near the town, I noticed a gang of about fifty ferocious fellows, in ragged sarapes. Several soldiers, well armed, paced up and down the road, and I afterwards learned that the diligence was frequently robbed there. Two long posts down the valley, made with horses going *à carrera*, brought us to Silao. While the grooms were changing teams, we supplied ourselves with oranges, bananas, *zapotes chicos* and *granaditas de China*. The latter fruit is about the size of an egg, with a brittle shell of a bright scarlet color, inside of which is a soft white sack. Breaking this open, the tender, fragrant pulp is revealed—the most dainty, exquisite thing that Nature ever compounded. We also bought an armful of sugar-cane, which we hung on the umbrella-hooks, and chopped up and chewed as thirst required.

From Silao to Guanajuato is but one post. Leaving the former

place, we approached a cape of the mountains, and traveled for several miles over wild hills covered with immense cactus trees, the trunks of many of them measuring two feet in diameter. From the summit we looked down into a large mountain-basin, opening towards the south into the Valley of Leon. On its opposite side, among mountains whose summits are the more sterile from the glittering veins of precious ore within, we saw the walls of some of the mining establishments of Guanajuato.

Of all places in Mexico, the situation of this city is the most picturesque and remarkable. It lies like an enchanted city, buried in the heart of the mountains. Entering a rocky cañada, the bottom of which barely affords room for the road, you pass between high adobe walls, above which, up the steep, rise tier above tier of blank, windowless, sun-dried houses, looking as if they had grown out of the earth. You would take them to be a sort of cubic chrysalization of the soil. Every corner in the windings of the road is filled with the buildings of mining companies—huge fortresses of stone, ramparted as if for defence. The scene varies with every moment;—now you look up to a church with purple dome and painted towers; now the blank adobe walls, with here and there a spiry cypress or graceful palm between them, rise far above you, along the steep ledges of the mountain; and again, the mountain itself, with its waste of rock and cactus, is all you see. The cañada finally seems to close. A precipice of rock—out of a rift in which the stream flows—shuts up the passage. Ascending this by a twist in the road, you are in the heart of the city. Lying partly in the narrow bed of the ravine and partly on its sides and in its lateral branches, it is only by mounting to some higher eminence that one can realize its extent and position. At the farther end of the city the mountains form a

cul de sac. The cañada is a blind passage, and you can only leave it by the road you came. The streets are narrow, crooked, and run up and down in all directions; there is no room for plazas nor alamedas. A little triangular space in front of the cathedral, however, aspires to the former title. The city reminded me of descriptions of the old Moorish towns of Spain—not as they now exist, but as they stood in the fourteenth century.

In the afternoon I took a walk through the city, climbing one of the hills to a cross planted on a small rocky point under the fortress of San Miguel. Thence I could look down on the twisted streets and flat house-tops, and the busy flood of life circulating through all. The churches, with their painted spires and domes, gave a bizarre and picturesque character to the scene. Off to the north, in the sides of the mountains, I could see the entrances to the silver mines, and the villages of the mining communities. Around Guanajuato there are more than a hundred mines, employing about seventy-five thousand workmen. The business of Guanajuato is now very flourishing, the mines having in 1849 yielded \$8,400,000, or \$600,000 more than the previous year. New mines have been opened on the rich vein of La Luz, which will soon be in a producing state, and promise much higher results. There is a fascination about the business, which is almost equal to that of play. The lucky discoverer of a new mine will frequently squander away the sudden wealth he has acquired in a week's dissipation. The wages of the common workmen vary from four reals to two dollars a day.

Before night I visited the cathedral and the churches of San Diego and San Felipe—the latter a dark old structure, covered with quaint, half-Gothic ornaments, its front shaded by several tall cypresses. In the church of San Diego, I saw a picture of

great beauty, of the Murillo school, but hardly, I think, an original of the renowned master of Spanish painting. After dinner, while wandering about, looking at the fruit-stands, which were lighted with a red glow by smoky torches, I witnessed a curious ceremony. One of a band of robbers, who had been taken and convicted, was to be shot the next morning. All the bells in the city commenced tolling at sunset, and the incessant ding-dong they kept up for nearly two hours, was enough to drive one frantic. I heard the sound of music, and saw the twinkling of wax tapers; I therefore pressed through the crowd into the middle of the little plaza, to obtain a good view of the procession. First came a company of soldiers, with a military band, playing dirges, after this the Bishop of the city bearing the Host, under a canopy of white and silver, borne by priests, who also carried lanterns of blue glass; another company of soldiers followed, and after them a long double line of citizens, each of whom held an immense burning taper in his hand. With the clang of bells and the wail of brazen instruments, they came towards us. The thousands in the plaza dropped on their knees, leaving me standing alone in the centre. A moment's reflection convinced me of the propriety of following their example, so I sank down between a woman with a very dirty rebosa and a black-bearded fellow, who might have been the comrade of the condemned robber.

The procession, keeping a slow and measured pace, proceeded to the prison, where the sacrament of extreme unction was administered to the criminal. It then returned to the cathedral, which was brilliantly lighted, and filled with a dense throng of people. The military band was stationed in the centre, under the dome, and mingled its harmonies with those of the powerful organ. I could get no further than the door-way, whence the whole interior

was visible as a lighted picture, framed in the gloomy arch under which I stood. The rise and swell of the choral voices—the deep, stunning peal of the bells in the tower—the solemn attitude of the crowd, and the blaze of light under which all these imposing ceremonies were seen—made a powerful impression on me. The people about me constantly repeated their paternosters, and seemed to feel a deep sympathy with the convicted. I remembered, that in the afternoon I had seen in the cathedral a man somewhat advanced in years, who was praying with an intensity of grief and supplication that made him for the time insensible to all else. His sobs and groans were so violent as to shake his whole frame; I had never seen a more vehement expression of anguish. Thinking he might have been the robber's father, I began to have some compassion for the former, though now and then a wicked feeling of rejoicing would steal in, that another of the tribe was soon to be exterminated. The most curious feature of the scene was a company of small boys, carrying bundles of leaves on which was printed the "Last Dying Speech and Confession," in poetry, the burden being "*Adios, Guanajuato amado!*" These boys were scattered through the crowd, crying out: "Here you have my sentence, my confession, my death, my farewell to Guanajuato—all for a *cuartilla!*" The exercises were kept up so long, that finally I grew weary, and went to bed, where the incessant bells rang death-knells in my dreams.

In Guanajuato I tasted *pulque* for the first and last time. Seeing a woman at the corner of a street with several large jars or what I took to be barley-water, I purchased a glass. I can only liken the taste of this beverage to a distillation of sour milk (if there could be such a thing) strongly tinctured with cayenne pepper and hartshorn. Men were going about the streets with cans

on their heads, containing ices made from tropical fruits, which were much more palatable.

They even have authors in Guanajuato. On the theatre bills I saw the announcement that an original tragedy entitled "*E Amor Conyugal*," by a young Guanajuatense, was in preparation. 'The precious comedy of the Two Fernandos and the Two Pepas' was to be given as an afterpiece—probably a travesty of the "Comedy of Errors."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DIVIDING RIDGE, AND DESCENT INTO THE VALLEY OF MEXICO.

WE were roused in Guanajuato at three o'clock in the morning, for the *jornada* of one hundred and ten miles to Queretaro. A splendid moon was riding near the zenith, with her attendant star at her side ; and by her light we drove down the ominous depths of the cañada. The clumsy leaves of the cactus, along the ledges of the hills, seemed in the uncertain light, like the heads of robbers peering over the rocks ; the crosses of the dead, here and there, spread out their black arms, and we were not free from all apprehensions of attack, until, after a post of three leagues, we reached the level and secure land of the *Bajío*. Once, only, a company of about twenty wild-looking men, whose weapons glittered in the moonlight, hooted at us as we passed ; we took them to be a part of the robber-band, on their way to Guanajuato to witness the execution of their comrade.

In five posts we reached the city of Salamanca, where breakfast was already on the table. No sooner had the final dish of frijoles and cup of coffee been dispatched, than the *cochero* summoned us. The mozo drew away with a jerk the rope which held the four leaders ; the horses plunged and pranced till the lumbering mass of the diligence began to move, when they set off in a furious

gallop. For ten miles, over the level road, the speed was scarcely slackened, till we drew up at the next post, and exchanged our dusty and reeking steeds for a fresh team, as fiery and furious as the first.

The country through which we passed, is one of the richest regions in Mexico. It is called the *Bajío*, or Lowland, but is in fact an extent of table-land, about four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and only lower than the mountain-ridges which enclose it and draw from the upper clouds the streams that give it perpetual growth. From the city of Leon, near Lagos, it extends to San Juan del Rio, beyond Queretaro—a distance of nearly two hundred miles. It is traversed by the Rio Lerma, the stream which, rising in the Volcano of Toluca (the neighbor of Popocatepetl) mingles with the waters of Lake Chapala, and afterwards—first as the Rio Blanco and then as the Rio Santiago—finds its way into the Pacific at San Blas. This immense level is all under fine cultivation and covered with thousand-acre fields of wheat, maize and barley in different stages of growth. The white fronts of haciendas gleamed from out their embowering gardens, in the distance, and the spires of the country towns, rising at intervals, gave life and animation to the picture. In the afternoon we passed the city of Zelaya, nearly smothered in clouds of dust that rose from the dry soil.

As we reached the boundary of the State of Queretaro, eight lancers, armed likewise with escopettes and holster-pistols, galloped out of the cactus on a wild, stony hill, and took their places on each side of us. They constituted a military escort (at the expense of the passengers,) to the gates of Queretaro. With their red pennons fluttering in the wind and their rugged little horses spurred into a gallop, they were very picturesque objects. Our

time was divided in watching their movements and looking out for the poles planted by the roadside as a sign that robbers had been taken and shot there. My Mexican fellow-travelers pointed to these tokens of unscrupulous punishment with evident satisfaction. A large tree near Queretaro, with a great many lateral branches, bears a sign with the words "*Por Ladrones*," (For Robbers,) in large letters. It is probably used when a whole company is caught at once.

We drove into Queretaro after dark, and the only glimpse I had of the place was from the balcony of the hotel. I regretted not having arrived earlier, for the purpose of visiting the cotton manufactory of Don Gaetano Rubio, which is the largest in the Republic. Among the passengers in the diligence from Mexico, who joined us at the dinner-table, was a jovial padre, who talked constantly of the Monplaisir troupe of dancers and Cœnen, the violinist. In fact, he was more familiar with American and European theatricals than any one I had met for a long time, and gave me a ready account of the whereabouts of Cerito, Ellsler, Taglioni, and all the other divinities of the dance. He then commenced a dissertation upon the character of the different modern languages. The English, he said, was the language of commerce; the French, of conversation; the German, of diplomacy, because there were no words of double meaning in it!—and the Spanish, of devotion. With his conversation and delightful cigaritos, I passed the hour before bed-time very pleasantly. I never met more lively and entertaining padre.

We drove to the town of San Juan del Rio, eleven leagues distant, for breakfast. A fresh escort was given us at every post, for which a fresh contribution of two reals was levied on each passenger. Towards evening, leaving the *Bajío*, we came upon a

large, arid *llano*, flat as a table, and lying at the foot of the Mount of Capulalpan. A string of mules, carrying stone from the mountains, stretched across it, till they almost vanished in the perspective. One by one they came up out of the distance, emptied the stones, which were heaped upon their backs in rough wicker frames, and turned about to repeat the journey. They belonged to the estate of Señor Zurutuza, proprietor of the diligence lines of Mexico, who shows as much prudence and skill in the cultivation of his lands as in the arrangement of his stages and hotels. The estate which he purchased of the Mexican Government, at a cost of \$300,000, contains thirty-seven square leagues, nearly all of which is arable land. The buildings stand in a little valley, nine thousand feet above the sea. The principal storehouse is two hundred feet square, and solid as a fortress. An arched entrance, closed by massive gates, leads to a paved courtyard, around which runs a lofty gallery, with pillars of oak resting on blocks of lava. Under this shelter were stored immense piles of wheat and chopped straw. On the outside, a number of persons were employed in removing the grain from a large circular floor of masonry, where it had been trodden out by mules, and separating it from the chaff by tossing it diligently in the wind. The hotel for the accommodation of travelers, is a new and elegant structure, and a decided improvement on other buildings of the kind in Mexico.

We slept soundly in the several rooms allotted to us, and by daybreak next morning were on the summit of the Pass of Capulalpan, about eleven thousand feet above the sea. The air was thin and cold; the timber was principally oak, of a stunted and hardy kind, and the general appearance of the place is desolate in the extreme. Here, where the streams of the two oceans are

divided, the first view of Popocatapetl, at more than a hundred miles distance, greets the traveler. A descent of many miles, through splendid plantations, lying in the lap of the mountains brought us to the old town of Tula, on the banks of the Tula River, which empties into the Gulf, at Tampico. Here we breakfasted, and then started on our last stage towards the capital. Crossing a low range of hills, we reached the Desagua, an immense canal, cut for the draining of the Valley of Mexico. The afternoon was hot and breezless; clouds of dust enveloped and almost stifled us, rising as they rolled away till they looked like slender pillars, swayed from side to side by the vibrations of the air. We passed the towns of Guatitlan and Tanepantla, where we only stopped to get a drink of *tepache*, a most nourishing and refreshing beverage, compounded of parched corn, pineapple, and sugar. The road was hedged by immense aloes, some of which had leaves ten feet in length: they are cultivated in great quantities for the pulque, which is manufactured from their juice. A few hours of this travel, on the level floor of the Valley of Mexico, brought us to the suburbs, where we met scores of people in carriages and on horseback, going out to take their evening *paseo* around the Alameda. Rattling over the streets of the spacious capital, in a few minutes we were brought to a stand in the yard of the Casa de Diligencias.

A few minutes after my arrival, the Vera Cruz stage drove into the yard. The first person who jumped out was my friend Mr Parrot, U. S. Consul at Mazatlan. Gov. Letcher, our Envoy to Mexico, came in the same stage, but was met at the Peñon Grande by a number of Americans in carriages, and brought into the city. It is a pleasant thing to have friends of your own size. I made my first appearance in the City of the Montezumas covered with

dust and clad in the weather-beaten corduroys, which were all the robbers left me. Thanks to the kind offer of Mr. Parrot and Mr Peyton, who accompanied him, I sat down to dinner in half an hour afterwards, looking and feeling much more like a member of civilized society

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SCENES IN THE MEXICAN CAPITAL.

I SALLIED out, on the bright sunny morning after reaching Mexico, to make a survey of the city. The sky was cloudless except on the horizon, in the direction of Popocatapetl, and the air was charmingly cool and fresh. Its rarity, by accelerating the breathing, had a stimulating effect, but I found that a faster pace than ordinary exhausted me in a few minutes. Most of the shops were closed, and the people from the neighboring villages began to come in for the morning mass. The streets are broad, tolerably clean, and have an air of solidity and massive strength beyond that of any modern city. The houses are all of stone, with few windows on the streets, but an arched gateway in the centre, leading to a patio, or courtyard, where the only correct view of their size and magnificence may be obtained. The glimpses through these gateways, while passing, are often very beautiful—the richly-sculptured frame of stone enclosing a sunny picture of a fountain, a cluster of orange-trees, or the slender, graceful arches of the corridor. The buildings are painted of some light, fresh color, pink and white being predominant; some of them, indeed, are entirely covered with arabesque patterns in fresco. The streets run at right angles, with nearly Philadelphian

regularity, but the system of naming them is very confusing to a stranger. A name extends no farther than a single block, the same street having sometimes as many as twenty different names in different places. Thus, while there are several thousand names of streets in the city, (all of them long and difficult to remember) the actual number of streets is small.

I wandered about for some time, looking for the Grand Plaza, and at last fell into the wake of the mass-going crowd, as the surest way to find it. It is in the very centre of the city, though the business quarter lies almost entirely on the western side. It is one of the most imposing squares in the world, and still far inferior to what it might be made. It covers about fourteen acres, which are entirely open and unbroken, except by a double row of orange-trees in front of the Cathedral. The splendid equestrian statue of Charles IV. by the sculptor Tolsa, which formerly stood in the centre, has been removed since the war of Independence, and the Government has never been able to replace it by something more to its republican taste. The National Palace, with a front of five hundred feet, occupies nearly the entire eastern side of the plaza, while the Cathedral, with a church adjoining, fills the northern. Around the other sides runs a *cortal*, whose arches are nearly blocked up by the wares and gay fabrics there disposed for sale. One of the houses forming this *cortal* was built by Cortez, and is still owned by his descendants. As in our own cities, there is a row of hacks strung along one side of the plaza, the drivers of which assail you with continual invitations to ride.

The Cathedral is grand and impressive from its very size, but the effect of the front is greatly injured by its incongruous style of architecture. There seems to have been no single design adopted, but after half had been built, the architect changed his plan and

finished the remainder in a different style. The front, as high as the Cathedral roof, has a venerable appearance of age and neglect, while the two massive, square, unadorned towers rising from it, are as brilliantly white and fresh as if erected yesterday. The front of the church adjoining is embossed with very elaborate ornaments of sculpture, all showing the same disregard of architectural unity. The interior of the Cathedral is far more perfect in its structure. The nave, resting its lofty arch on pillars of a semi-Gothic character, with the gorgeous pile of the high-altar at its extremity, blazing with gold and silver and precious marbles, looks truly sublime in the dim, subdued light which fills it. The railing around the altar is solid silver, as well as the lamps which burn before it. In the shrines along the side aisles there are many paintings of fine character, but everywhere the same flash of gold and appearance of lavish treasure. The Cathedral was crowded to the very door by a throng of rancheros, Indians, stately ladies in silks and jewels, soldiers and *lepéros*, kneeling side by side. The sound of the organ, bearing on its full flood the blended voices of the choir, pealed magnificently through the nave. There were some very fine voices among the singers, but their performance was wanting in the grand and perfect unison which distinguishes the Italian chorus.

In the afternoon, there was a great fair or festival at Tacubaya, and half the population of the city went out to attend it. The stages in front of the Diligence Hotel, which bore the inscription on their sides: "*A Tacubaya, por 2 reales*," were jammed with passengers. I preferred a quiet walk in the Alameda to a suffocating ride in the heat and dust, and so did my friend, Peyton. The Alameda is a charming place, completely shaded by tall trees, and musical with the plash of fountains.

Through its long avenues of foliage, the gay equipages of the aristocracy may be seen rolling to and from the *paseo*—President Herrera, in a light, open carriage, followed by a guard of honor, among them. We roamed through the cool, shaded walks, finding sufficient amusement in the curious groups and characters we constantly met until the afternoon shadows grew long and the sun had nearly touched the Nevada of Toluca. Then, joining the increasing crowd, we followed the string of carriages past a guard-house where a company of trumpeters shattered all the surrounding air by incessant prolonged blasts, that nearly tore up the paving-stones. A beautiful road, planted with trees, and flanked by convenient stone benches, extended beyond for about a mile, having a circle at its further end, around which the carriages passed, and took their stations in the return line. We sat down on one of the benches facing the ring, enjoying the tranquillity of the sunset and the animation of the scene before us. The towers of Mexico rose behind us, above the gardens which belt the city; the rock of Chapultepec was just visible in front, and far to the south-east, a snowy glimmer, out of the midst of a pile of clouds, revealed the cone of Popocatepetl. Among the equipages were some of great magnificence: that of Don Gaetano Rubio was perhaps the most costly. Large American horses are in great demand for these displays, and a thousand dollars a pair is frequently paid for them. The mixture of imported vehicles—English, French and American—with the bomb-proof arks and moveable fortifications of the country, was very amusing, though their contrast was not more marked than that of the occupants. The great ambition of a Mexican family is to ride in a carriage on all public occasions, and there are hundreds who starve themselves

on tortillas and deny themselves every comfort but the cigarito that they may pay the necessary hire.

I went one evening to the Teatro de Santa Anna, which is one of the finest theatres in the world. On this occasion, the performance might have honorably stood the ordeal of even Paris criticism. There was a ballet by the Monplaisir troupe, songs by the prima donna of the native opera and violin solos by Frans Coenen. The theatre is very large, having, if I remember rightly, five tiers of boxes, yet it was crowded in every part. There was a great display of costly dresses and jewelry, but I saw much less beauty than on the moonlit plaza of Guadalajara. The tendency of the Mexican women to corpulency very soon destroys the bloom and graces of youth; indeed, their season of beauty is even more brief than in the United States. Between the acts the spectators invariably fell to smoking. The gentlemen lit their *puros*, the ladies produced their delicate boxes of cigaritos and their matches, and for some minutes after the curtain fell, there was a continual snapping and fizzing of brimstone all over the house. By the time the curtain was ready to rise, the air was sensibly obscured, and the chandeliers glimmered through a blue haze. At home, this habit of smoking by the ladies is rather graceful and pretty; the fine paper cigar is handled with an elegance that shows off the little arts and courtesies of Spanish character, with the same effect as a fan or a bouquet; but a whole congregation of women smoking together, I must admit, did take away much of the reverence with which we are wont to regard the sex. Because a lady may be a Juno in beauty, is no reason why she should thus retire into a cloud—nor is the odor of stale tobacco particularly Olympian.

The streets of Mexico are always an interesting study. Ever

after visiting the other large cities of the Republic, one is here introduced to new and interesting types of Mexican humanity. Faces of the pure Aztec blood are still to be found in the squares and market-places, and the canal which joins Lakes Chalco and Tezcuco is filled with their flat canoes, laden with fruits, vegetables and flowers. They have degenerated in everything but their hostility to the Spanish race, which is almost as strong as in the days of Montezuma. The *léperos* constitute another and still more disgusting class; no part of the city is free from them. They implore you for alms with bended knees and clasped hands, at every turn; they pick your pockets in broad daylight, or snatch away your cloak if there is a good opportunity; and if it be an object with any one to have you removed from this sphere of being, they will murder you for a small consideration. The second night I spent in Mexico, my pocket was picked in the act of passing a corner where two or three of them were standing in a group. I discovered the loss before I had gone ten steps further; but, though I turned immediately, there was no one to be seen. The *aguadores*, or water-carriers, are another interesting class, as they go about with heavy earthen jars suspended on their backs by a band about the forehead, and another smaller jar swinging in front to balance it, by a band over the top of the head. The priests, in their black cassocks and shovel hats with brims a yard long, are curious figures; the monasteries in the city send out large numbers of fat and sensual friars, whose conduct even in public is a scandal to the respectable part of the community. In all the features of its out-door life, Mexico is quite as motley and picturesque as any of the old cities of Spain. The Republic seems to have in no way changed the ancient order, except by

tearing down all the emblems of royalty and substituting the eagle and cactus in their stead.

The scarcity of all antiquities of the Aztec race, will strike travelers who visit the city. Not one stone of the ancient capital has been left upon another, while, by the gradual recession of the waters of the lakes, the present Mexico, though built precisely on the site of the ancient one, stands on dry ground. There are frequently inundations, it is true, caused by long-continued rains, which the mountain slopes to the north-east and south-west send into the valley, but the construction of the Desagua—an immense canal connecting Lake Tezcuco with the Rio Montezuma—has greatly lessened the danger. Of all the temples, palaces, and public edifices of the Aztecs, the only remains are the celebrated Calendar, built into one corner of the cathedral, the Sacrificial Stone and a collection of granite gods in the National Museum. The Calendar is an immense circular stone, probably ten feet in diameter, containing the divisions of the Aztec year, and the astronomical signs used by that remarkable people. The remaining antiquities are piled up neglectedly in the court-yard of the Museum, where the stupid natives come to stare at them, awed, yet apparently fascinated by their huge, terrible features. The Sacrificial Stone is in perfect preservation. It is like a great mill-stone of some ten or twelve feet diameter, with a hollow in the centre, from which a groove slants to the edge, to carry away the blood of the victim. Scattered around it on the pavement were idols of all grotesque forms, feathered serpents and hideous combinations of human and animal figures. The Aztec war-god, Quetzalcoatl, was the hugest and most striking of all. He was about fourteen feet in height, with four faces, and as many pairs of arms and legs, fronting towards the quarters of the com-

pass, his mouth was open and tongue projecting, and in the hollow thus formed, the heart of the victim was thrust, while yet warm and palpitating. His grim features struck me with awe and something like terror, when I thought of the thousands of human hearts that had stained his insatiate tongues. Here, at least, he Aztecs had a truer conception of the Spirit of War than ourselves. We still retain the Mars of the poetic Greeks—a figure of strength and energy, and glorious ardor only—not the grand monster which all barbaric tribes, to whom war is a natural instinct, build for their worship.

There are some relics of the Spanish race in this museum, which I should not omit to mention. In one dusty corner, behind a little wooden railing, are exhibited the coats-of-mail of Cortez and Alvarado. The great Cortez, to judge from his helmet, breast-plate and cuishes, was a short, broad-chested and powerful man—the very build for daring and endurance. Alvarado was a little taller and more slight, which may account for his celebrated leap—the measure of which is still shown on a wall near the city, though the ditch is filled up. In the centre of the court-yard stands the celebrated equestrian statue of Charles IV., by the Mexican sculptor, Tolsa. It is of bronze, and colossal size. In the general spirit and forward action of the figures, it is one of the best equestrian statues in the world. The horse, which was modeled from an Andalusian stallion of pure blood, has been censured. It differs, in fact, very greatly from the perfect Grecian model, especially in the heavy chest and short round flank; but those who have seen the Andalusian horse consider it a perfect type of that breed. It is a work in which Mexico may well glory, for any country might be proud to have produced it.

CHAPTER XL.

MEXICAN POLITICS AND POLITICAL MEN.

I SPENT one morning during my stay in Mexico, in visiting both Houses of the Mexican Congress, which were then in session, in the National Palace. I could not but regret, on approaching this edifice, that so fine an opportunity for architectural effect had been lost through a clumsy and incongruous plan of building. The front of five hundred feet, had it been raised another story, and its flat pink surface relieved by a few simple pilasters and cornices, would have equaled that of the Pitti Palace or the Royal *Residenz* in Munich. One of its court-yards, with a fountain in the centre and double gallery running around the four sides, is nevertheless complete and very beautiful. While looking out of the windows of the Palace on the magnificent square, the foremost picture in my mind's eye was not that of Cortez and Alvarado, battling their way back to Tlascala, after the "Noche Triste;" not that of the splendid trains of the Viceroy's of yet powerful Spain; but the triumphal entry of Scott, when the little army that had fought its way in from Chapultepec, greeted his appearance on the Plaza with huzzas that brought tears even into Mexican eyes. Think as one may of the character of the war, there are scenes in it which stir the blood and brighten the eye.

ELDORADO.

Mr. Belden, an American many years resident in Mexico, accompanied me to the Halls of Congress, and pointed out the principal characters present. We first visited the Senate Chamber—a small elliptical room in the centre of the Palace. There were no desks except for the Secretaries, the members being seated on a continuous bench, which ran around the room, with a rail in front of it. Probably two-thirds of the Senators—fifteen or twenty in all—were present. The best head among them is that of Otero, who, I think, was one of the Cabinet during the war. He is a large, strongly-built man, with features expressing not only intelligence, but power. At the end of the room sat Don Luis Cuevas, one of the Commissioners who signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—a man of polished bearing, and, from appearance, something of a *diplomat*. Gen. Almonte, whose low forehead, broad cheek-bones and dark skin betray his Indian blood, occupied the seat next to Pedraza, the President of a few days during a revolution in 1828. Almonte is the son of the Liberator Morelos, and that circumstance alone gave him an interest in my eyes.

The demeanor of the Senate is exceedingly quiet and grave. The speeches are short, though not, in consequence, always to the point. On the contrary, I am told that any definite action on any subject is as difficult to be had as in our own Congress. It is better, however, to do nothing decorously, than after a riotous fashion.

The Hall of Congress fronts on one of the inner courts of the Palace. It is semi-circular in form, and lighted by windows of blue glass, near the top. As in the Senate, the members have no desks, but are ranged along two semi-circular benches, the outer one raised a step from the floor. The Speaker sits on a broad platform, in front of the centre of the chord, with two Secretaries on

each hand. At each corner of the platform is a circular pulpit just large enough to take in a spare man nearly to the armpits. They are used by the members for set harangues. Behind the Speaker's chair, and elevated above it, is a sort of throne with two seats, under a crimson canopy. Here, the President of the Republic and the Speaker of Congress take their seats, at the opening and close of each Session. Above the canopy, in a gilded frame, on a ground of the Mexican tricolor, hangs the sword of Iturbide. A picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, with her blue mantle and silver stars, completes the decorations. Around the architrave of the pillars which form the semi-circle and across the cornice of the chord, are inscribed, in letters of gold, the names of the Mexican Chiefs of the War of Independence—conspicuous among them those of Morelos, Bravo, Victoria and Mina.

The Mexican Congress elects its Speaker monthly. The incumbent at the time, Portillo, was a young man, who presided with admirable dignity and decorum. As in the Senate, the members exhibit a grave and courteous demeanor; the etiquette of dignified legislation, I presume, is never violated. The only notable Representative present was Arrangoiz, whose name is well known in the United States. I was disappointed in not seeing Alaman, the head of the Monarchist faction, Editor of the *Universal*, and author of an excellent History of Mexico, then in the course of publication. Two or three short speeches were made during my visit, but I was not sufficiently versed either in the language or politics, to get more than the general drift of them. Congress appeared to be doing nothing satisfactory; the thinking population (a very small number) were discontented, and with reason. A short time previous, the Report of the Committee of Finance came up for discussion. After engaging the House for

several days, during which many warm speeches were made on both sides, all seemed ready for a decision ; when, lo ! the members suddenly determined that *they had no right to vote upon it*

One o'clock the same afternoon was the hour appointed for the presentation of Mr. Letcher, the new Envoy from the United States. On coming out of the Senate Chamber we noticed that the corridor leading to the rooms of the President was deserted by the groups of officers in full uniform who had been lounging about the door. Entering the ante-chamber, we found that Mr. Letcher, with Mr. Walsh, Secretary of Legation, had just passed into the Hall of Audience. Mr. Belden was well known to all the officers of Government, and his company procured us admission at once. We took our places among the Secretaries of the different Departments, about half way up the Hall. Gen. Herrera, the President, was seated on a platform at the end of the room, under a crimson canopy, having on his right hand Lacunza, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and on his left Castañeda, Minister of Justice. The other Ministers, with a number of officers of the General Staff, were ranged at the foot of the platform. Mr. Letcher had just commenced his address as we entered. He appeared slightly embarrassed during the first phrases, but soon recovered the proper composure. I had no doubt, however, that he would have felt much more at home in making a stump speech in his native Kentucky. His address consisted mainly of expressions of good will on the part of the United States, and a desire for more intimate and amicable relations between the two Governments. Gen. Herrera on receiving the letters accrediting Mr. Letcher replied in a neat speech, cordially responding to the expressions of amity which had been made, and invoking for both nations the same harmony

in their mutual relations as they already possessed in their constitutional forms.

After the interchange of a few compliments, Mr. Letcher took his leave, and immediately afterwards the President rose and left the hall, in company with his Ministers. He bowed to us in passing, probably recognizing us as Americans. He is a man of about sixty, of short stature, and with a countenance whose prominent expression is honesty and benevolence. This corresponds with the popular idea of his character. He is a man of excellent heart, but lacks energy and determination. His Government, though quiet and peaceful enough at present, is not sufficiently strong for Mexico. So long as the several States continue to defy and violate the Federal Compact, a powerful Head is needed to the General Government. The rule of Herrera met with no open opposition. At the time of my visit, the country was perfectly quiet. The insurrection in the Sierra Madre had been entirely quelled, and the ravages of the Indians in Durango and Chihuahua appeared to have subsided for a time. Nevertheless, the Conservative party, whose tendency is towards a monarchy, was said to be on the increase—a fact no doubt attributable to the influence and abilities of Alaman, its avowed leader. The name of Santa Anna had been brought forward by his friends, as a candidate for Congress from the district of the Capital, though his success was scarcely a matter of hope.

The Government was still deeply embarrassed by its forced loans, and Congress took the very worst means to settle its difficulty. A committee, appointed to report some plan of settlement, made the following propositions, which I here give, as a curiosity in legislation:—1. That the Government be authorized to make an amicable arrangement with its creditors, within the space of

forty days. (!) 2. That such arrangement cannot take effect without the approbation of Congress; (!!)

and 3. That the Government be authorized to accept a further sum of \$300,000 on the American indemnity. The resignation of Señor Elorriaga the Minister of Finance, was fully expected, and took place, in fact, about three weeks after I left. Very few Ministers hold this office more than two or three months. The entire want of confidence between the Executive and Legislative Departments utterly destroys the efficiency of the Mexican Government. The Ministers wear a chain, which is sometimes so shortened by the caprice of Congress, that the proper exercise of their functions is rendered impossible.

Several of the States had a short time previous been taking singular liberties with the Constitution. For instance, the Legislatures of Zacatecas, Durango and Jalisco, had separately passed laws regulating the revenue not only on internal commerce, but foreign imports! The duties on many articles were enormous, as, for instance, in the State of Jalisco, 37 1-2 cents per lb. on tobacco, and 75 cents on snuff. Zacatecas, with a curious discrimination, imposed a duty of 12 1-2 per cent. on home manufactures, and 5 per cent. on foreign merchandise! In such a state of things one knows not which most to wonder at, the audacity of the States, or the patient sufferance of the Supreme Government.

I scanned with some curiosity the faces and forms of the chief officers of the Republic as they passed.

Herrera wore the uniform of a general—a more simple costume than that of the other officers present, whose coats were ornamented with red facings and a profusion of gold embroidery. The Ministers, except Arista, were dressed in plain suits of black.

Lacunza is a man of low stature and dark complexion, and a barely perceptible cast of shrewdness is mingled with the natural intelligence of his features. Castañeda, on the other hand, is tall, thin, with a face of which you are certain, at the first glance that it knows how to keep its owner's secrets. The finest-looking man present was Gen. Arista, who is six feet high, and stout in proportion, with a large head, light hair closely cropped, fair complexion and gray eyes. From the cast of his features, one would take him to be a great overgrown Scotch boy, who had somehow blundered into a generalship. He is said to have the most influential hand in the Cabinet. Among the States of the North there is, as is well known, a powerful party devoted to his interests.

While in Mexico, I had the pleasure of meeting with Don Vicente Garcia Torres, the talented editor of the *Monitor Republicano*, as well as with several of the writers for *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*. To M. René Masson, the enterprising editor and proprietor of *Le Trait D'Union*, (the only foreign journal in Mexico,) I was also indebted for many courteous attentions. His paper is conducted with more industry and gives a more intelligible view of Mexican affairs than any of the native prints. The Count de la Cortina, the most accomplished writer in Mexico, and author of several works, was pointed out to me in the street one day. He possesses a princely fortune and the finest picture-gallery in America.

CHAPTER XL.

RIDES TO CHAPULTEPEC AND GUADALUPE.

No American, whatever be his moral creed or political sentiments, should pass through Mexico without a visit to the battle-fields in the Valley, where his country's arms obtained such signal triumphs. To me they had a more direct, thrilling interest than the remains of Aztec Empire or the Spanish Viceroyalty. I was fortunate in seeing them with a companion, to whom every rood of ground was familiar, and who could trace all the operations of Scott's army, from San Augustin to the Grand Plaza in the city. We started for Chapultepec one fine afternoon, with Mr. Belden, taking his carriage and span of black mules. We drove first to the Garita de Belén, where one of the aqueducts enters the city. Here a strong barricade was carried after the taking of Chapultepec by Pillow's division, while Worth, following down the line of the other aqueduct, got possession of the Garita de San Cosmé. The brick arches are chipped with shot for the whole distance of three miles. The American troops advanced by springing from arch to arch, being exposed, as they approached the Garita, to a cross-fire from two batteries. The running battle of the Aqueducts, from Chapultepec to Mexico, a distance of three miles, was a brilliant achievement, and had

not our forces been so flushed and excited with the storming of the height, and the spirit of the Mexicans proportionately lessened, the slaughter must have been terrible.

We followed the aqueduct, looking through its arches on the green wheat-fields of the Valley, the shining villages in the distance and sometimes the volcanoes, as the clouds grew thinner about their white summits. At last, we reached the gate of Chapultepec. Mr. Belden was known to the officer on guard, and we passed unchallenged into the shade of Montezuma's cypresses. Chapultepec is a volcanic hill, probably two hundred feet in height, standing isolated on the level floor of the valley. Around its base is the grove of cypress trees, known as Montezuma's Garden—great, gnarled trunks, which have been formed by the annual rings of a thousand years, bearing aloft a burden of heavy and wide-extending boughs, with venerable beards of gray moss. The changeless black-green of the foliage, the dull, wintry hue of the moss, and the gloomy shadows which always invest this grove, spoke to me more solemnly of the Past—of ancient empire, now overthrown, ancient splendor, now fallen into dust, and ancient creeds now forgotten and contemned,—than the shattered pillars of the Roman Forum or the violated tombs of Etruria. I saw them on a shaded, windless day, with faint glimmerings of sunshine between the black and heavy masses of cloud. The air was so still that not a filament of the long mossy streamers trembled; the trees stood like giant images of bronze around the rocky foot of the hill. The father of the band, who, like a hoary-headed seneschal, is stationed at the base of the ascending carriage-way, measures forty-five feet in circumference, and there are in the grove several others of dimensions but little inferior. The first

onset of our troops, in storming Chapultepec, was made under cover of these trees.

Leaving our carriage and mules in charge of the old cypress, we climbed the hill on foot. The zigzag road still retains its embankment of adobes and the small corner-batteries thrown up in anticipation of the attack ; the marks of the cannon-balls from Tacubaya and the high ground behind Molino del Rey, are everywhere visible. The fortress on the summit of Chapultepec has been for many years used as a National Military Academy. We found a company of the cadets playing ball on a graveled terrace in front of the entrance. One of them escorted us to the private apartments of the commanding officer, which are built along the edge of a crag, on the side towards Mexico. Mr. Belden was well acquainted with the officer, but, unfortunately, he was absent. His wife, however, received us with great courtesy and sent for one of the Lieutenants attached to the Academy. A splendid Munich telescope was brought from the observatory, and we adjourned to the balcony for a view of the Valley of Mexico.

I wish there was a perspective in words—something beyond the mere suggestiveness of sound—some truer representative of color, and light, and grand aerial distance ; for I scarcely know how else to paint the world-wide panorama spread around me. Chapultepec, as I have said before, stands isolated in the centre of the Valley. The mountains of Toluca approach to within fifteen miles beyond Tacubaya, and the island-like hills of Guadalupe are not very distant, on the opposite side ; but in nearly every other direction the valley fades away for fifty or sixty miles before striking the foot of the mountains. The forms of the chains which wall in this little world are made irregular and wonderfully picturesque by the embaying curves of the Valley—now receding far and faint,

now piled nearer in rugged and barren grandeur, now tipped with a spot of snow, like the Volcano of Toluca, or shooting far into the sky a dazzling cone, like cloud-girdled Popocatepetl. But the matchless Valley—how shall I describe that? How reflect or this poor page its boundless painting of fields and gardens, its silvery plantations of aloes, its fertilizing canals, its shimmering lakes, embowered villages and convents, and the many-towered capital in the centre—the boss of its great enameled shield? Before the aqueducts ran on their thousand arches towards the city, the water sparkling in their open tops; the towers of the cathedral, touched with a break of sunshine, shone white as silver against the cloud-shadowed mountains; Tacubaya lay behind, with its palaces and gardens; farther to the north Tacuba, with the lone cypress of the “Noche Triste,” and eastward, on the point of a mountain-cape shooting out towards Lake Texcoco, we saw the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Around the foot of our rocky watch-tower, we looked down on the heads of the cypresses, out of whose dark masses it seemed to rise, sundered by that weird ring from the warmth and light and beauty of the far-reaching valley-world.

We overlooked all the battle-grounds of the Valley, but I felt a hesitancy at first in asking the Lieutenant to point out the localities. Mr. Belden at length asked whether we could see the height of Padierna, or the *pedregal* (field of lava) which lies to the left of it. The officer immediately understood our wish, and turning the glass first upon the Peñon Grande, (an isolated hill near Ayotla,) traced the march of Gen. Scott’s army around Lake Chalco to the town of San Augustin, near which the first hostilities commenced. We could see but a portion of the field of Padierna, more familiarly known as Contreras. It lies on the lower slopes of the Nevada of Toluca, and overlooking the scenes of the subse-

quent actions The country is rough and broken, and the crossing of the famed *pedregal*, from the far glimpse I had of the ground, must have been a work of great labor and peril. Nearly east of this, on the dead level of the valley, is the memorable field of Churubusco. The *tête de pont*, where the brunt of the battle took place, was distinctly visible, and I could count every tree in the gardens of the convent. The panic of the Mexicans on the evening after the fight at Churubusco was described to me as having been without bounds. Foreigners residing in the capital say it might then have been taken with scarce a blow.

Beyond Tacubaya, we saw the houses of Miscoac, where the army was stationed for some time before it advanced to the former place. Gen. Scott's head-quarters was in the Bishop's Palace at Tacubaya, which is distinctly seen from Chapultepec and within actual reach of its guns. On an upland slope north of the village and towards Tacuba the shattered walls of the Casa Mata were pointed out. Near at hand—almost at the very base of the hill—rose the white gable of Molino del Rey. The march of the attacking lines could be as distinctly traced as on a map. How Chapultepec, which commands every step of the way, could be stormed and carried with such a small force, seems almost miraculous. Persons who witnessed the affair from Tacubaya told me that the yells of the American troops as they ascended the hill in the face of a deadly hail of grape-shot, were absolutely terrific when they reached the top the Mexicans seemed to lose all thought of further defence, pouring in bewildered masses out of the doors and windows nearest the city, and tumbling like a torrent of water down the steep rocks. The Lieutenant, who was in Chapultepec at the time, said that one thousand and fifty bombs fell on the fortress before the assault; the main tower, the battlements and

stairways are still broken and shattered from their effects. "Here," said he, as we walked along the summit terrace, "fifty of ours lie buried; and down yonder"—pointing to the foot of the hill—"so many that they were never counted." I was deeply moved by his calm, sad manner, as he talked thus of the defeat and slaughter of his countrymen. I felt like a participant in the injury, and almost wished that he had spoken of us with hate and reproach.

I do not believe, however, that Mexican enmity to the United States has been increased by the war, but rather the contrary. During all my stay in the country I never heard a bitter word said against us. The officers of our army seem to have made friends everywhere, and the war, by throwing the natives into direct contact with foreigners, has greatly abated their former prejudice against all not of Spanish blood. The departure of our troops was a cause of general lamentation among the tradesmen of Mexico and Vera Cruz. Nothing was more common to me than to hear Generals Scott and Taylor mentioned by the Mexicans in terms of entire respect and admiration. "If you should see General Taylor," said a very intelligent gentleman to me, "tell him that the Mexicans all honor him. He has never given up their houses to plunder; he has helped their wounded and suffering; he is as humane as he is brave, and they can never feel enmity towards him." It may be that this generous forgetfulness of injury argues a want of earnest patriotism, but it was therefore none the less grateful to me as an American.

We took leave of our kind guide and descended the hill. It was now after sunset; we drove rapidly through the darkening cypresses and across a little meadow to the wall of Molino del Rey. A guard admitted us into the courtyard, on one side of which loomed the tall structure of the mill: the other sides were flanked

with low buildings, flat-roofed, with heavy parapets of stone along the outside. Crossing the yard, we passed through another gate to the open ground where the attack was made. This battle, as is now generally known, was a terrible mistake, costing the Americans eight hundred lives without any return for the sacrifice. The low parapets of the courtyard concealed a battery of cannon, and as our troops came down the bare, exposed face of the hill, rank after rank was mowed away by their deadly discharge. The mill was taken, it is true, but, being perfectly commanded by the guns of Chapultepec, it was an untenable position.

It was by this time so dark that we returned to the city by the route we came, instead of taking the other aqueduct and following the line of Gen. Worth's advance to the Garita of San Cosmé. Landing at Mr. Belden's residence, the Hotel de Bazar, we went into the Café adjoining, sat down by a marble table under the ever-blooming trees of the court-yard, and enjoyed a *chirimoya* ice—how delicious, may readily be imagined when I state that this fruit in its native state resembles nothing so much as a rich vanilla cream. The Café de Bazar is kept by M. Arago, a brother of the French astronomer and statesman, and strikingly like him in features. At night, the light Moorish corridors around his fountained court-yard are lighted with gay-colored lamps, and knots of writers, politicians or stray tourists are gathered there until ten o'clock, when Mexican law obliges the place to be closed.

Mr. Peyton and myself procured a pair of spirited mustangs and one morning rode out to the village of Guadalupe, three miles on the road to Tampico. It was a bright, hot day, and *Iztaccihuatl* flaunted its naked snows in the sun. The road was crowded with *arrieros* and *rancheros*, on their way to and from th

city--suspicious characters, some of them, but we had left our purses at home and taken our pistols along. The shrine of the Virgin was closed at the time but we saw the little chapel in which it was deposited and the flight of steps cut in the rock, which all devout Christians are expected to ascend on their knees. The principal church in the place is a large, imposing structure, but there is a smaller building entirely of blue and white glazed tiles, the effect of which is remarkably neat and unique. Half way up the hill, some rich Mexican who was saved from shipwreck by calling upon the Virgin of Guadalupe, has erected a votive offering in the shape of an immense mast and three sails, looking, at a distance, like part of an actual ship.

After a week in Mexico, I prepared to leave for Vera Cruz, to meet the British steamer of the 16th of February. The seats in the diligence had all been engaged for ten days previous, and I was obliged to take a place in the *pescante*, or driver's box, for which I paid \$34. Again I rolled my sarape around my scanty luggage and donned the well-worn corduroy coat. I took leave of my kind friend Mr. Parrot, and lay down to pass my last night in the city of the Montezumas.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE BASE OF POPOCATAPETL.

WHEN we were called up by the mozo, at four o'clock, the air was dark, damp and chilly: not a star was to be seen. The travelers who gathered to take their chocolate in the dining-hall wore heavy cloaks or sarapes thrown over the shoulder and covering the mouth. Among them was my companion from Guanaajuato, Don Antonio de Campos. I climbed to my seat in the *pescante*, above the driver and groom, and waited the order to start. At last the inside was packed, the luggage lashed on behind, and the harness examined by lanterns, to see that it was properly adjusted. "*Vamos!*" cried the driver; the rope was jerked from the leaders, and away we thundered down the silent streets, my head barely clearing the swinging lamps, stretched from corner to corner. We passed through the great plaza, now dim and deserted: the towers of the Cathedral were lost in mist. Crossing the canal, we drove through dark alleys to the barrier on the city, where an escort of lancers, in waiting among the gloomy court-yards, quietly took their places on either side of us.

A chill fog hung over all the valley. The air was benumbing, and I found two coats insufficient to preserve warmth. There are no gardens and fields of maguey on this side of the city, as on that

of Tacubaya Here and there, a plantation of maize interrupts the uniformity of the barren plains of grass. In many places, the marshy soil bordering on Lake Tezeuco, is traversed by deep ditches, which render it partially fit for cultivation. Leaving the shores of Tezeuco, we turned southward, changed horses at the little Peñon, (an isolated hill, between Lakes Chalco and Xochimilco) and drove on to Ayotla. This is the point where the American army under Gen. Scott left the main road to Mexico, turning around the Peñon Grande, south of the town, and taking the opposite shore of Lake Chalco. It is a small, insignificant village, but prettily situated beside the lake and at the foot of the towering Peñon; a little further, a road branches off to Ameca and the foot of Popocatepetl. Here we left the valley, and began ascending the barren slopes of the mountain. Clumps of unsightly cactus studded the rocky soil, which was cut into rough arroyos by the annual rains.

Slowly toiling up the ascent, we changed horses at a large hacienda, built on one of the steps of the mountains, whence, looking backward, the view of the valley was charming. The Peñon stood in front; southward, towards Ameca and Tenango, stretched a great plain, belted with green wheat-fields and dotted with the white towers of villages. The waters of Chalco were at our feet, and northward, through a gap in the hills, the broad sheet of Lake Tezeuco flashed in the sun. But it was not till we had climbed high among the pine forests and looked out from under the eaves of the clouds, that I fully realized the grandeur of this celebrated view. The vision seemed to embrace a world at one glance. The Valley of Mexico, nearly one hundred miles in extent, lay below, its mountain-walls buried in the clouds which hung like a curtain above the immense picture. But through a

rift in this canopy, a broad sheet of sunshine slowly wandered over the valley, now glimmering on the lakes and brightening the green of the fields and gardens, and now lighting up, with wonderful effect, the yellow sides of the ranges of hills. Had the morning been clear, the view would have been more extended, but I do not think its broadest and brightest aspect could have surpassed in effect, the mysterious half-light, half-gloom in which I saw it.

The clouds rolled around us as I gazed, and the cold wind blew drearily among the pines. Our escort, now increased to twelve lancers, shortened their ascent by taking the mule paths. They looked rather picturesque, climbing in single file through the forest; their long blue cloaks hanging on their horses' flanks and their red pennons fluttering in the mist. The rugged defiles through which our road lay, are the most famous resort for robbers in all Mexico. For miles we passed through one continued ambush, where frequent crosses among the rocks hinted dark stories of assault and death. Our valorous lancers lagged behind, wherever the rocks were highest and the pines most thickly set; I should not have counted a single moment on their assistance, had we been attacked. I think I enjoyed the wild scenery of the pass more, from its perils. The ominous gloom of the day and the sound of the wind as it swept the trailing clouds through the woods of pine, heightened this feeling to something like a positive enjoyment.

When we reached the inn of Rio Frio, a little below the summit of the pass, on its eastern side, our greatest danger was over. Breakfast was on the table, and the eggs, rice, guisados and frijoles speedily disappeared before our sharp-set appetites. Luckily for our hunger, the diligence from Puebla had not arrived. The little valley of Rio Frio is hedged in by high, piny peaks, somewhat

resembling the Catskills. Below it, another wild, dangerous pass of two or three miles opens upon the fertile and beautiful table-land of Puebla. The first object that strikes the eye on emerging from the woods, is the peak of Malinche, standing alone on the plain, about midway between the mountain ranges which terminate, on the Mexican side, in Popocatepetl, on the Vera Cruz side, in Orizaba. I looked into the sky, above the tree-tops, for the snows of Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl, but only a few white streaks on the side of the former volcano, could be seen. A violent snow-storm was raging along its summit, and upon Popocatepetl, which was entirely hidden from sight.

The table-land on which we entered, descends, with a barely perceptible slant, to Puebla—a distance of forty miles. Its surface, fenceless, and almost boundless to the eye, is covered with wheat and maize. Fine roads cross it; and the white walls of haciendas, half-buried in the foliage of their gardens, dot it, at intervals, to the feet of the distant mountains. The driver, an intelligent Mexican, pointed out to me the various points of interest, as we passed along. He professed to speak a little English, too, which he said he had picked up from passengers on the road, but as all his English amounted only to a choice vocabulary of oaths, it told badly for the character of his passengers.

All afternoon the clouds covered the summits of the volcanoes, and stretching like a roof across the table-land, rested on the broad shoulders of Malinche. As the sun descended, they lifted a little, and I could see the sides of Popocatepetl as far as the limit of the snow; but his head was still hooded. At last, through a break just above the pinnacle of his cone, the light poured in a full blaze, silvering the inner edges of the clouds with a sudden and splendid lustre. The snowy apex of the mountain, bathed in

full radiance, seemed brighter than the sun itself—a spot of light so pure, so inconceivably dazzling, that though I could not withdraw my gaze, the eye could scarcely bear its excess. Then, as the clouds rolled together once more, the sun climbing through numerous rifts, made bars of light in the vapory atmosphere, eaching from the sides of Popocatepetl to their bases, many leagues away, on the plain. It was as if the mountain genii who built the volcano had just finished their work, leaving these, the airy gangways of their scaffolding, still planted around it, to attest its marvellous size and grandeur.

The most imposing view of Popocatepetl is from the side towards Puebla. It is not seen, as from the valley of Mexico, over the rims of intermediate mountains, but the cone widens downward with an unbroken outline, till it strikes the smooth tableland. On the right, but separated by a deep gap in the range, is the broad, irregular summit of Iztaccihuatl, gleaming with snow. The signification of the name is the “White Lady,” given by the Aztecs on account of a fancied resemblance in its outline to the figure of a reclining female. The mountain of Malinche, opposite to the volcanoes, almost rivals them in majestic appearance. It rises from a base of thirty miles in breadth, to a height of about thirteen thousand feet. I gazed long upon its cloudy top and wooded waist, which the sun belted with a beam of gold, for on its opposite side, on the banks of a river which we crossed just before reaching Puebla, stands the ancient city of Tlascala. The name of the volcano Malinche, is an Aztec corruption of Mariana, the Indian wife of Cortez. I could not look upon it without an ardent desire to stand on its sides, and with Bernal Diaz in hand, trace out the extent of the territory once possessed by his brave and magnanimous allies.

On the other hand, between me and the sunset, stood a still more interesting memorial of the Aztec power. There, in full view, its giant terraces clearly defined against the sky, the topmost one crowned with cypress, loomed the Pyramid of Cholula. The lines of this immense work are for the most part distinctly cut; on the eastern side, only, they are slightly interrupted by vegetation, and probably the spoliation of the structure. Although several miles distant, and rising from the level of the plain, without the advantage of natural elevation, the size of the pyramid astonished me. It seems an abrupt hill, equal in height and imposing form to the long range in front of it, or the dark hill of Tlaloc behind. Even with Popocatepetl for a back-ground, its effect does not diminish. The Spaniards, with all their waste of gold on heavy cathedrals and prison-like palaces, have never equalled this relic of the barbaric empire they overthrew.

I do not know whether the resemblance between the outline of this pyramid and that of the land of Mexico, from sea to sea, has been remarked. It is certainly no forced similitude. There is the foundation terrace of the Tierra Caliente; the steep ascent to the second broad terrace of the table-land; and again, the succeeding ascent to the lofty, narrow plateau dividing the waters of the continent. If we grant that the forms of the pyramid, the dome, the pillar and the arch, have their antitypes in Nature, it is no fanciful speculation to suppose that the Aztecs, with that breadth of imagination common to intelligent barbarism, made *their world* the model for their temples of worship and sacrifice.

Cholula vanished in the dusk, as we crossed the river of Tlascalala and entered the shallow basin in which stands Puebla. The many towers of its churches and convents showed picturesquely in the twilight. The streets were filled with gay crowds return

ing from the Alameda. Motley maskers, on horseback and on foot, reminded us that this was the commencement of Carnival. The great plaza into which we drove was filled with stands of fruit-venders, before each of which flared a large torch raised upon a pole. The cathedral is in better style, and shows to greater advantage than that of Mexico. So we passed to the Hotel de Diligencias, where a good dinner, in readiness, delighted us more than the carnival or the cathedral.

After the final dish of frioles had been dispatched, I made a short night-stroll through the city. The wind was blowing strong and cold from the mountains, whistling under the arches of the portal and flaring the red torches that burned in the market-place. The fruit-sellers, nevertheless, kept at their posts, exchanging jokes occasionally with a masked figure in some nondescript costume. I found shelter from the wind, at last, in a grand old church, near the plaza. The interior was brilliantly lighted, and the floor covered by kneeling figures. There was nothing in the church itself, except its vastness and dimness, to interest me; but the choral music I there heard was not to be described. A choir of boys, alternating with one of rich masculine voices, overran the full peal of the organ, and filled the aisle with delicious harmony. There was a single voice, which seemed to come out of the air, in the pauses of the choral, and send its clear, trumpet-tones directly to the heart. As long as the exercises continued, I stood by the door, completely chained by those divine sounds. The incense finally faded; the tapers were put out one by one; the worshippers arose, took another dip in the basin of holy water, and retired; and I, too, went back to the hotel, and tried to keep warm under cover of a single sarape.

The manufactures of Puebla are becoming important to Mexico

—the more so, from the comparative liberality which is now exercised towards foreigners. A few years ago, I was informed, a stranger was liable to be insulted, if not assaulted, in the streets but, latterly, this prejudice is vanishing. The table-land around the city is probably one of the finest grain countries in the world. Under a proper administration of Government, Puebla might become the first manufacturing town in Mexico.

CHAPTER XLIII.

GLIMPSES OF PURGATORY AND PARADISE.

Rising before three o'clock is no pleasant thing, on the high table-land of Puebla, especially when one has to face the cold from the foretop of a diligence ; but I contrived to cheat the early travel of its annoyance, by looking backward to Popocatepetl, which rose cold and unclouded in the morning twilight. We sped over fertile plains, past the foot of Malinche, and met the sunrise at the town of Amozoque, another noted robber-hold. In the arroyos which cross the road at its eastern gate a fight took place between the advanced guard of the American army and a body of Mexican soldiers, on the march to the capital.

From Amozoque the plain ascends, with a scarcely perceptible rise, to the summit of the dividing ridge, beyond Perote. The clouds, which had gathered again by this time, hid from our view the mountain barriers of the table-land, to the east and west. The second post brought us to Acajete, whose white dome and towers we saw long before reaching it, projected brightly against the pines of a steep mountain behind. One is only allowed time at the posts to stretch his legs and light a cigar. The horses—or mules, as the case may be—are always in readiness, and woe to the

•

unlucky traveler who stands a hundred yards from the diligence when the rope is drawn away from the ramping leaders.

The insular mountain of Acajete shelters a gang of robbers among its ravines, and the road, bending to the left around its base, is hedged with ambush of the most convenient kind. The driver pointed out to me a spot in the thicket where one of the gang was shot not long before. Half-way up the acclivity, a thread of blue smoke rose through the trees, apparently from some hut or camp on a little shelf at the foot of a precipice. Further than this, we saw nothing which seemed to denote their propinquity. The pass was cleared, the horses changed at El Pinal—a large hacienda on the north side of the mountain—and we dashed on till nearly noon, when the spires of Nopalucá appeared behind a distant hill—the welcome heralds of breakfast!

Beyond this point, where a trail branches off to Orizaba, the character of the scenery is entirely changed. We saw no longer the green wheat-plains and stately haciendas of Puebla. The road passed over an immense llano, covered with short, brown grass, and swept by a furious wind. To the north, occasional peaks—barren, rocky and desolate in their appearance,—rose at a short distance from our path. On the other hand, the llano stretched away for many a league, forming a horizon to the eye before it reached the foot of the mountains. The wind frequently increased to such a pitch that all trace of the landscape was lost. Columns of dust, rising side by side from the plain, mingled as they whirled along, shrouding us as completely as a Newfoundland fog. The sun was at times totally darkened. My eyes, which were strongly blood-shot, from too much gazing at the snows of Popocatepetl, were severely affected by this hurricane. But there is no evil without some accompanying good; and the same wind

which nearly swifed me with dust, at last brushed away the clouds from the smooth, gradual outline of Cofre de Perote, and revealed the shining head of Orizaba.

Beyond La Venta de Soto, the road skirts a striking peak of rock, whose outline is nearly that of an exact pyramid, several thousand feet in height. The mozo called it Monte Pizarro. From its dark ravines the robbers frequently sally, to attack travelers on the plain. At some distance from the road, I noticed a mounted guard who followed us till relieved by another, planted at short intervals. As the sunset came on, we reached a savage volcanic region, where the only vegetation scattered over the ridgy beds of black lava, was the yucca and the bristly cactus. There were no inhabitants; some huts, here and there, stood in ruins; and the solitary guard, moving like a shadow over the lava hills, only added to the loneliness and increased the impression of danger. I have seen many wild and bleak spots, but none so absolutely Tartarean in its aspect. There was no softer transition of scene to break the feeling it occasioned, for the nightfall deepened as we advanced, leaving everything in dusky shadow, but the vast bulk of Cofre de Perote, which loomed between me and the southern stars. At last, lights glimmered ahead; we passed down a street lined with miserable houses, across a narrow and dirty plaza, and into a cramped court-yard. The worst dinner we ate on the whole journey was being prepared in the most cheerless of rooms. This was Perote.

I went out to walk after dinner, but did not go far. The squalid look of the houses, and the villanous expression of the faces, seen by the light of a few starving lamps, offered nothing attractive, and the wind by this time was more piercing than ever. Perote bears a bad reputation in every respect: its situation is

the bleakest in Mexico, and its people the most snameless in their depredations. The diligence is frequently robbed at the very gates of the town. We slept with another blanket on our beds, and found the addition of our sarapes still desirable. The mozo awoke us at half-past two, to coffee and chocolate in the cold. I climbed into the pescante and drew the canvas cover of the top around my shoulders. The driver—an American, who had been twenty years on the road—gave the word of starting, and let his eight mules have full rein. Five lancers accompanied us—two some distance in advance, one on each side and one bringing up the rear. The stars shone with a frosty lustre, looking larger and brighter in the thin air. We journeyed for two hours in a halt darkness, which nevertheless permitted me to see that the country was worth little notice by daylight—a bleak region, ten thousand feet above the sea, and very sparsely inhabited.

About sunrise we reached the summit of the pass, and commenced descending through scattering pine woods. The declivity was at first gradual, but when we had passed the bevelled slope of the summit ridge, our road lay along the very brink of the mountains overlooking everything that lay between them and the Gulf of Mexico. Immediately north of the pass, the mountain chain turns eastward, running towards the Gulf in parallel ridges, on the summits of which we looked down. The beds of the valleys, wild, broken, and buried in a wilderness but little visited, were lost in the dense air, which filled them like a vapor. Beginning at the region of lava and stunted pine, the eye travels downward, from summit to summit of the ranges, catching, at intervals, glimpses of gardens, green fields of grain, orange orchards, groves of palm and gleaming towers, till at last it rests on the far-away glimmer of the sea, under the morning sun. Fancy yourself riding along

the ramparts of a fortress ten thousand feet in height, with all the climates of the earth spread out below you, zone lying beyond zone, and the whole bounded at the furthest horizon to which vision can reach, by the illimitable sea! Such is the view which meets one on descending to Jalapa.

The road was broad and smooth, and our mules whirled us downward on a rapid gallop. In half an hour from the time when around us the hoar-frost was lying on black ridges of lava and whitening the tips of the pine branches, we saw the orange and banana, basking in the glow of a region where frost was unknown. We were now on the borders of paradise. The streams, leaping down crystal-clear from the snows of Cofre de Perote, fretted their way through tangles of roses and blossoming vines; the turf had a sheen like that of a new-cut emerald; the mould, upturned for garden land, showed a velvety richness and softness, and the palm, that true child of light, lifted its slender shaft and spread its majestic leaves against the serene blue of heaven. As we came out of the deep-sunken valleys on the brow of a ridge facing the south, there stood, distinct and shadowless from base to apex, the Mountain of Orizaba. It rose beyond mountains so far off that all trace of chasm or ledge or belting forest was folded in a veil of blue air, yet its grand, immaculate cone, of perfect outline, was so white, so dazzling, so pure in its frozen clearness, like that of an Arctic morn, that the eye lost its sense of the airy gulf between, and it seemed that I might stretch out my hand and touch it. No peak among mountains can be more sublime than Orizaba. Rising from the level of the sea and the perpetual summer of the tropics, with an unbroken line to the height of eighteen thousand feet, it stands singly above the other ranges with its spotless crown of snow, as some giant, white-haired

Northern king might stand among a host of the weak, effeminate sybarites of the South. Orizaba dwells alone in my memory, as the only perfect type of a mountain to be found on the Earth.

After two leagues of this enchanting travel we came to Jalapa, a city of about twenty thousand inhabitants, on the slope of the hills, half-way between the sea and the table-land, overlooking the one and dominated by the other. The streets are as clean as a Dutch cottage; the one-story, tiled houses, sparkling in the sun, are buried in gardens that rival the Hesperides. Two miles before reaching the town the odor of its orange blossoms filled the air. We descended its streets to the Diligence Hotel, at the bottom, where, on arriving, we found there would be no stage to Vera Cruz for two days, so we gave ourselves up to the full enjoyment of the spot. My fellow-passenger for Guanajuato, Don Antonio de Campos, and myself, climbed into the tower of the hotel, and sat down under its roof to enjoy the look-out. The whole landscape was like a garden. For leagues around the town it was one constant alternation of field, grove and garden—the fields of the freshest green, the groves white with blossoms and ringing with the songs of birds, and the gardens loading the air with delicious perfume. Stately haciendas were perched on the vernal slopes, and in the fields; on the roads and winding mule-paths of the hills we saw everywhere a gay and light-hearted people. We passed the whole afternoon in the tower; the time went by like a single pulsation of delight. I felt, then, that there could be no greater happiness than in thus living forever, without a single thought beyond the enjoyment of the scene. My friend, Don Antonio, was busy with old memories. Twenty years before, he came through Jalapa for the first time, an ardent, aspiring youth, thinking to achieve his fortune in three or four years and return with it to his native

Portugal ; but alas ! twenty years had barely sufficed for the fulfilment of his dreams—twenty years of toil among the barren mountains of Guanajuato. Now, he said, all that time vanished from his mind ; his boyish glimpse of Jalapa was his Yesterday, and the half-forgotten life of his early home lay close behind it.

After dinner, all our fellow-travelers set out for the Alameda, which lies in a little valley at the foot of the town. A broad paved walk, with benches of stone at the side and stone urns on lofty pedestals at short intervals, leads to a bridge over a deep chasm, where the little river plunges through a mesh of vines into a large basin below. Beyond this bridge, a dozen foot-paths lead off to the groves and shaded glens, the haciendas and orange orchards. The idlers of the town strolled back and forth, enjoying the long twilight and balmy air. We were all in the most joyous mood, and my fellow-passengers of three or four different nations expressed their delight in as many tongues, with an amusing contrast of exclamations : “ *Ah, que joli petit pays de Jalape !* ” cried the little Frenchwoman, who had talked in a steady stream since leaving Mexico, notwithstanding she was going to France on account of delicate lungs. “ *Siente usted el aroma de las naranjas ?* ” asked a dark-eyed Andalusian. “ *Himmliche Luft !* ” exclaimed the enraptured German, unconsciously quoting Götz von Berlichingen. Don Antonio turned to me, saying in English : “ My pulse is quicker and my blood warmer than for twenty years ; I believe my youth is actually coming back again.” We talked thus till the stars came out and the perfumed air was cool with invisible dew.

When we awoke the next morning it was raining, and continued to rain all day—not a slow, dreary drizzle, nor a torrent of heavy drops, as rain comes to us, but a fine, ethereal, gauzy veil of mois-

ture that scarcely stirred the grass on which it fell or shook the light golden pollen from the orange flowers. Every two or three days such a shower comes down on the soil of Jalapa—

“ a perpetual April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald.”

We could not stroll among the gardens or sit under the urns of the Alameda, but the towers and balconies were left us ; the landscape, though faint and blurred by the filmy rain, was nearly as beautiful, and the perfume could not be washed out of the air. So passed the day, and with the night we betook ourselves early to rest, for the Diligence was to leave at three o'clock on the morrow.

For two leagues after leaving Jalapa I smelt the orange blossoms in the starry morning, but when daylight glimmered on the distant Gulf, we were riding between bleak hills, covered with chapparal, having descended to the barren heats of the tropical winter, beyond the line of the mountain-gathered showers. The road was rough and toilsome, but our driver, an intelligent American, knew every stone and rut in the dark and managed his eight mules with an address and calculation which seemed to me marvellous. He had been on the road six years, at a salary of \$150 per month, from the savings of which he had purchased a handsome little property in Jalapa. Don Juan, as the natives called him, was a great favorite along the road, which his sturdy, upright character well deserved. At sunrise we reached the hacienda of El Encero, belonging to Santa Anna, as do most of the other haciendas between Jalapa and Vera Cruz. The hill of Cerro Gordo appeared before us, and a drive of an hour brought us to the cluster of cane-huts bearing the same name.

The physical features of the field of Cerro Gordo are very interesting. It is a double peak, rising from the midst of rough, rolling hills, covered with a dense thicket of cactus and thorny shrubs. Towards Vera Cruz it is protected by deep barrancas and passes, which in proper hands might be made impregnable. Had Gen. Scott attempted to take it by advancing up the broad highway, he must inevitably have lost the battle; but by cutting a road through the chapparal with great labor, making a circuit of several miles, he reached the north-eastern slope of the hill—the most accessible point, and according to the Mexican story, the side least defended. Having gained one of the peaks of the hill, the charge was made down the side and up the opposite steep in the face of the Mexican batteries. The steady march of our forces under this deadly hail, to the inspiring blast of the Northern bugles, has been described to me by officers who took part in the fight, as the most magnificent spectacle of the war. After taking the battery, the guns were turned upon the Mexicans, who were flying through the chapparal in all directions. Many, overcome by terror, leaped from the brink of the barranca at the foot of the hill and were crushed to death in the fall. Santa Anna, who escaped at this place, was taken down by a path known to some of the officers. The chapparal is still strewn thickly with bleached bones, principally of the mules and horses who were attached to the ammunition wagons of the enemy. The driver told me that until recently there were plenty of cannon-balls lying beside the road, but that every American, English or French traveler took one as a relic, till there were no more to be seen. A shallow cave beside the road was pointed out as the spot where the Mexicans hid their ammunition. It was not discovered by our troops but a Mexican who knew the secret, sold it to them out of re

venge for the non-payment of some mules which he had furnished to his own army. The driver lay hidden in Jalapa for some days previous to the battle, unable to escape, and the first intelligence he received of what had taken place, was that furnished by the sight of the flying Mexicans. They poured through the town that evening and the day following, he said, in the wildest disorder, some mounted on donkeys, some on mules, some on foot, many of the officers without hats or swords, others wrapped in the dusty coat of a private, and all cursing, gesticulating and actually weeping, like men crazed. They had been so confident of success that the reverse seemed almost heart-breaking.

A few miles beyond Cerro Gordo we reached Plan del Rio, a small village of cane huts, which was burned down by order of Santa Anna, on the approach of the American forces. A splendid stone bridge across the river was afterwards blown up by the guerillas, in the foolish idea that they would stop an American specie-train, coming from Vera Cruz. In half a day after the train arrived there was an excellent road across the chasm, and the Mexicans use it to this day, for the shattered arch has never been rebuilt. From Plan del Rio to the Puente Nacional is about three leagues, through the same waste of cactus and chapparal. The latter place, the scene of many a brush with the guerillas during the war, is in a very wild and picturesque glen, through which the river forces its way to the sea. The bridge is one of the most magnificent structures of the kind on the continent. On a little knoll, at the end towards Jalapa, stands a stately hacienda belonging to Santa Anna.

We sped on through the dreary chapparal, now sprinkled with palms and blossoming trees. The country is naturally rich and productive, but is little better than a desert. The only inhabitants

are a set of half-naked Indians, who live in miserable huts, supporting themselves by a scanty cultivation of maize, and the deer they kill in the thickets. Just before we reached the sea-shore one of these people came out of the woods, with a little spotted fawn in his arms, which he offered to sell. The driver bought it for a dollar, and the beautiful little creature, not more than two weeks old, was given to me to carry. I shielded it from the cold sea-wind, and with a contented bleat it nestled down in my lap and soon fell fast asleep.

At sunset we drove out on the broad sands bordering the Gulf. A chill norther was blowing, and the waves thundered over the coral reefs with a wintry sound. Vera Cruz sat on the bleak shore, a league before us, her domes and spires painted on the gloomy sky. The white walls of San Juan d'Ulloa rose from the water beyond the shipping. Not a tree or green thing was to be seen for miles around the city, which looked as completely desolate as if built in the middle of Zahara. Nevertheless, I blessed the sight of it, and felt a degree of joy as I passed within its gates, for the long journey of twelve hundred miles across the Continent was safely accomplished.

CHAPTER XLIV.

VERA CRUZ AND SAN JUAN D'ULLOA—HOMEWARD.

I CANNOT say much of Vera Cruz. A town built and sustained by commerce alone, and that not the most flourishing, presents few points of interest to the traveler. Its physiognomy differs but little from that of the other Mexican cities I have described. There is the Plaza, flanked by the Cathedral,—the same pink mass of old Spanish architecture, picturesque only for its associations—the Diligence Hotel, with its arched corridor forming a *portal* along one side—the dreary, half-deserted streets, with their occasional palaces of stone enclosing paved and fountained courtyards—the market, heaped with the same pyramids of fruit which have become so familiar to us—the dirty adobe huts, nearest the walls, with their cut-throat population—and finally, the population itself, rendered more active, intelligent and civilized by the presence of a large number of foreigners, but still comprised mainly of the half-breed, with the same habits and propensities as we find in the interior. The town is contracted; standing in the plaza, one can see its four corners, bounded by the walls and the sea, and all within a few minutes' walk. Outside of the gates we come at once upon the deserts of sand.

On reaching Vera Cruz, there were no tidings of the steamer which was due on the 4th. The U. S. schooner Flirt, Capt Farren, was in port waiting for a norther to go down, to sail for New Orleans, but there was small chance of passage on board of her. On the morning of the 15th, the U. S. steamer Water-witch Capt Totten, made her appearance, bound homeward after a cruise to Havana, Sisal, Campeachy and Laguna. I had almost determined, in default of any other opportunity, to take passage in her, as a "distressed citizen," when, on rowing out to the Castle of San Juan d'Ulloa on the third morning, one of the boatmen descried a faint thread of smoke on the horizon. "*El vapor!*" was the general exclamation, and at least fifty dissatisfied persons recovered their good-humor.

My friend Don Antonio was acquainted with the Commandante of the Castle, Don Manuel Robles, by which means we obtained free admission within its coral walls. It is a place of immense strength, and in the hands of men who know how to defend it, need no more be taken than Gibraltar. We climbed to the top of the tower, walked around the parapets, shouted into the echoing wells sunk deep in the rock, and examined its gigantic walls. The spongy coral of which it is built receives the shot and shells that have been thrown upon it, without splintering; here and there we noticed holes where they had imbedded themselves in it, rather adding to its solidity. We sat two or three hours in the tower, watching the approaching smoke of the steamer. As the chimes rang noon in Vera Cruz, a terrific blast of trumpets pealed through the courtyard of the Castle, below us. The yellow-faced soldiers, in their white shirts and straw hats with the word "Ulua" upon them, mustered along one side, and after a brief drill, had their dinner of rice frijoles and coffee served to them. The force is

the Castle appeared very small ; the men were buried in its immense vaults and galleries, and at times, looking down from the tower, scarcely a soul was to be seen. The Commandante invited us to his quarters, and offered us refreshments, after we had made the round of the parapets. Singularly enough, his room was hung with American engravings of the battles of the late war

The most interesting object in Vera Cruz is an old church, in the southern part of the city, which was built by Cortez, in 1531—the oldest Christian church in the New World. Some miles distant is the old town of Vera Cruz, which was abandoned for the present site. I had not time to visit it, nor the traces of the Americans among the sand-hills encircling the city. One Sunday evening, however, I visited the *paseo*, a paved walk outside the gate, with walls to keep off the sand and some miserable attempts at trees here and there. As it was Carnival, the place was crowded, but most of the promenaders appeared to be foreigners. Beyond the paseo, however, stood a cluster of half-ruined buildings, where the lower class of the native population was gathered at a fandango. After the arrival of the steamer nothing was talked of but our departure and nothing done but to pack trunks and contrive ways of smuggling money, in order to avoid the export duty of six per cent

We left Vera Cruz on the morning of February 19th, and reached Tampico Bar after a run of twenty-two hours. The surf was so high after the recent norther, that we were obliged to wait three days before the little river-steamer could come to us with her million of dollars. The Thames, however, was so spacious and pleasant a ship, that we were hardly annoyed by the delay. Coming from semi-civilized Mexico, the sight of English order and the en-

joyment of English comfort were doubly agreeable. Among our passengers were Lady Emeline Stuart Wortley, returning from a heroic trip to Mexico ; Lord Mark Kerr, a gentleman of intelligence and refinement, and an amateur artist of much talent ; and Mr Hill, an English traveler, on his way home after three years spent in Russia, Siberia, Polynesia, and the interior of South America. My eight days spent on board the Thames, passed away rapidly, and on the afternoon of the 26th, we made the light-house on Mobile Point, and came to among the shipping at the anchorage. I transferred myself and baggage to the deck of a high-pressure freight-boat, and after lying all night in the bay, on account of a heavy fog, set foot next morning on the wharf at Mobile.

Leaving the same afternoon, I passed two days on the beautiful Alabama River ; was whirled in the cars from Montgomery to Opelika, and jolted twenty-four hours in a shabby stage, over the hills of Georgia, to the station of Griffin, on the Central Railroad, sped away through Atlanta and Augusta to Charleston ; tossed a night on the Atlantic, crossed the pine-barrens of Carolina and the impoverished fields of the Old Dominion ; halted a day at Washington to deliver dispatches from Mexico, a day at HOME, in Pennsylvania, and finally reached my old working-desk in the Tribune Office on the night of March 10th—just eight months and eight days from the time of my departure.

Thus closed a journey more novel and adventurous than any I hope to make again. I trust the profit of it has not been wholly mine, but that the reader who has followed me through the foregoing pages, may find some things in them, which to have read were not also to have forgotten.

THE
STORY OF KENNETT

BY
BAYARD TAYLOR

AUTHOR'S REVISED EDITION

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by
• BAYARD TAYLOR,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

PROLOGUE.

TO MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS OF KENNETT :

I WISH to dedicate this Story to you, not only because some of you inhabit the very houses, and till the very fields which I have given to the actors in it, but also because many of you will recognize certain of the latter, and are therefore able to judge whether they are drawn with the simple truth at which I have aimed. You are, naturally, the critics whom I have most cause to fear ; but I do not inscribe these pages to you with the design of purchasing your favor. I beg you all to accept the fact as an acknowledgment of the many quiet and happy years I have spent among you ; of the genial and pleasant relations into which I was born, and which have never diminished, even when I have returned to you from the farthest ends of the earth ; and of the use (often unconsciously to you, I confess,) which I have drawn from your memories of former days, your habits of thought and of life.

I am aware that truth and fiction are so carefully woven together in this Story of Kennett, that you will sometimes be at a loss to disentangle them. The lovely pastoral landscapes which I know by heart, have been copied, field for field and tree for tree, and these you will immediately

recognize. Many of you will have no difficulty in detecting the originals of Sandy Flash and Deb. Smith ; a few will remember the noble horse which performed the service I have ascribed to Roger ; and the descendants of a certain family will not have forgotten some of the pranks of Joe and Jake Fairthorn. Many more than these particulars are drawn from actual sources ; but as I have employed them with a strict regard to the purposes of the Story, transferring dates and characters at my pleasure, you will often, I doubt not, attribute to invention that which I owe to family tradition. Herein, I must request that you will allow me to keep my own counsel ; for the processes which led to the completed work extend through many previous years, and cannot readily be revealed. I will only say that every custom I have described is true to the time, though some of them are now obsolete ; that I have used no peculiar word or phrase of the common dialect of the country which I have not myself heard ; and further, that I owe the chief incidents of the last chapter, given to me on her death-bed, to the dear and noble woman whose character (not the circumstances of her life) I have endeavored to reproduce in that of Martha Deane.

The country life of our part of Pennsylvania retains more elements of its English origin than that of New England or Virginia. Until within a few years, the conservative influence of the Quakers was so powerful that it continued to shape the habits even of communities whose religious sentiment it failed to reach. Hence, whatever might be selected as incorrect of American life, in its broader sense, in these pages, is nevertheless locally true ; and to this, at least, all of you, my Friends and Neighbors, can testify. In these days, when Fiction prefers to deal with abnormal

characters and psychological problems more or less exceptional or morbid, the attempt to represent the elements of life in a simple, healthy, pastoral community, has been to me a source of uninterrupted enjoyment. May you read it with half the interest I have felt in writing it!

BAYARD TAYLOR.

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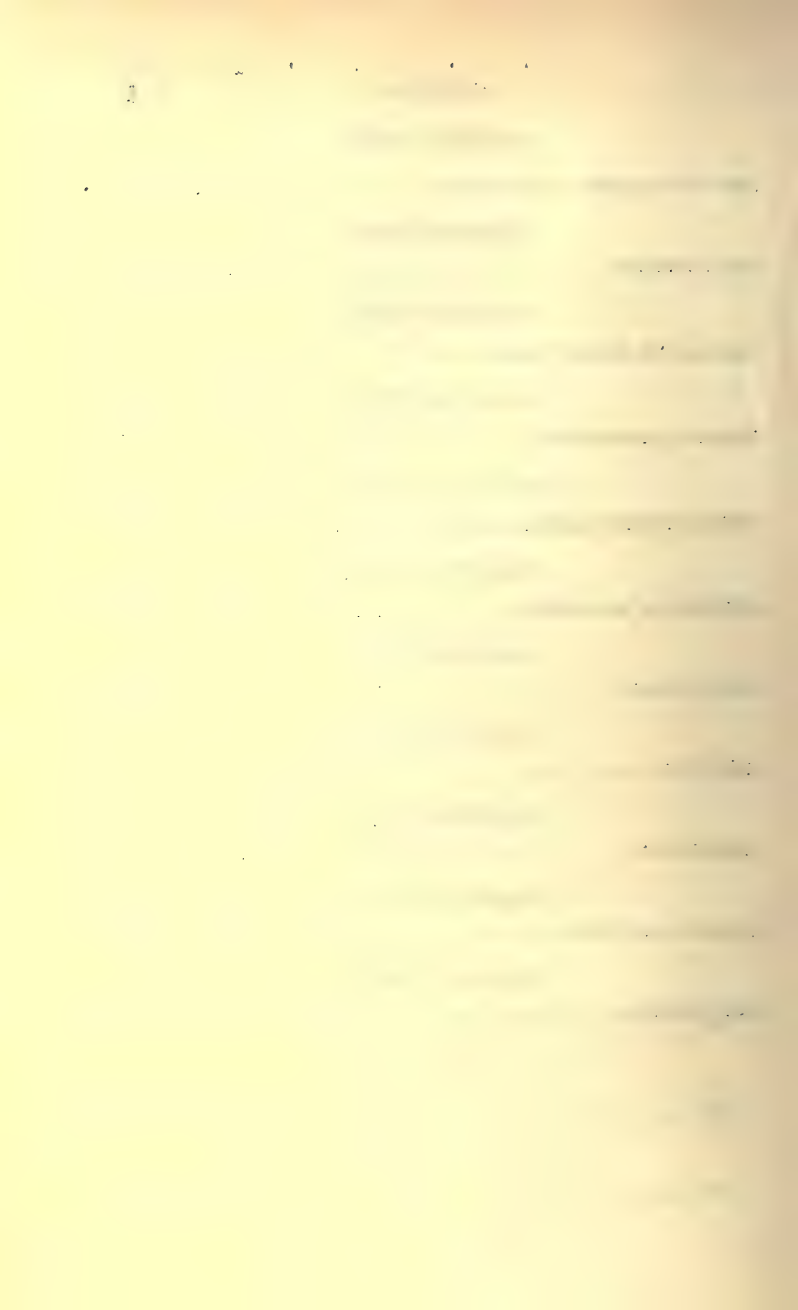
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THE STORY OF KENNETT.

CHAPTER I

THE CHASE.

AT noon, on the first Saturday of March, 1796, there was an unusual stir at the old Barton farm-house, just across the creek to the eastward, as you leave Kennett Square by the Philadelphia stage-road. Any gathering of the people at Barton's was a most rare occurrence ; yet, on that day and at that hour, whoever stood upon the porch of the corner house, in the village, could see horsemen approaching by all the four roads which there met. Some five or six had already dismounted at the Unicorn Tavern, and were refreshing themselves with stout glasses of "Old Rye," while their horses, tethered side by side to the pegs in the long hitching-bar, pawed and stamped impatiently. An eye familiar with the ways of the neighborhood might have surmised the nature of the occasion which called so many together, from the appearance and equipment of these horses. They were not heavy animals, with the marks of plough-collars on their broad shoulders, or the hair worn off their rumps by huge breech-straps ; but light and clean-limbed, one or two of them showing signs of good blood, and all more carefully groomed than usual.

Evidently, there was no "vendue" at the Barton farm-house ; neither a funeral, nor a wedding, since male guests seemed to have been exclusively bidden. To be sure, Miss Betsy Lavender had been observed to issue from Dr.

Deane's door, on the opposite side of the way, and turn into the path beyond the blacksmith's, which led down through the wood and over the creek to Barton's; but then, Miss Lavender was known to be handy at all times, and capable of doing all things, from laying out a corpse to spicing a wedding-cake. Often self-invited, but always welcome, very few social or domestic events could occur in four townships (East Marlborough, Kennett, Pennsbury, and New-Garden) without her presence; while her knowledge of farms, families, and genealogies extended up to Fallowfield on one side, and over to Birmingham on the other.

It was, therefore, a matter of course, whatever the present occasion might be, that Miss Lavender put on her broad gray beaver hat, and brown stuff cloak, and took the way to Barton's. The distance could easily be walked in five minutes, and the day was remarkably pleasant for the season. A fortnight of warm, clear weather had extracted the last fang of frost, and there was already green grass in the damp hollows. Bluebirds picked the last year's berries from the cedar-trees; buds were bursting on the swamp-willows; the alders were hung with tassels, and a powdery crimson bloom began to dust the bare twigs of the maple-trees. All these signs of an early spring Miss Lavender noted as she picked her way down the wooded bank. Once, indeed, she stopped, wet her forefinger with her tongue, and held it pointed in the air. There was very little breeze, but this natural weathercock revealed from what direction it came.

"Southwest!" she said, nodding her head — "Lucky!"

Having crossed the creek on a flat log, secured with stakes at either end, a few more paces brought her to the warm, gentle knoll, upon which stood the farm-house. Here, the wood ceased, and the creek, sweeping around to the eastward, embraced a quarter of a mile of rich bottom-land, before entering the rocky dell below. It was a pleas-

ant seat, and the age of the house denoted that one of the earliest settlers had been quick to perceive its advantages. A hundred years had already elapsed since the masons had run up those walls of rusty hornblende rock, and it was even said that the leaden window-sashes, with their diamond-shaped panes of greenish glass, had been brought over from England, in the days of William Penn. In fact, the ancient aspect of the place — the tall, massive chimney at the gable, the heavy, projecting eaves, and the holly-bush in a warm nook beside the front porch, had, nineteen years before, so forcibly reminded one of Howe's soldiers of his father's homestead in mid-England, that he was numbered among the missing after the Brandywine battle, and presently turned up as a hired hand on the Barton farm, where he still lived, year in and year out.

An open, grassy space, a hundred yards in breadth, intervened between the house and the barn, which was built against the slope of the knoll, so that the bridge to the threshing-floor was nearly level, and the stables below were sheltered from the north winds, and open to the winter sun. On the other side of the lane leading from the high-road stood a wagon-house and corn-crib — the latter empty, yet evidently, in spite of its emptiness, the principal source of attraction to the visitors. A score of men and boys peeped between the upright laths, and a dozen dogs howled and sprang around the smooth corner-posts upon which the structure rested. At the door stood old Giles, the military straggler already mentioned — now a grizzly, weather-beaten man of fifty — with a jolly grin on his face, and a short leather whip in his hand.

"Want to see him, Miss Betsy?" he asked, touching his mink-skin cap, as Miss Lavender crawled through the nearest panel of the lofty picket fence.

"See him?" she repeated. "Don't care if I do, afore goin' into th' house."

"Come up, then; out o' the way, Cato Fan, take that,

you slut! Don't be afeard, Miss Betsy; if folks kept em in the leash, as had ought to be done, I'd have less trouble. They 're mortal eager, and no wonder. There!—a'n't he a sly-lookin' divel? If I'd a hoss, Miss Betsy, I'd fol-ler with the best of 'em, and maybe you would n't have the brush?"

"Have the brush. Go along, Giles! He's an old one, and knows how to take care of it. Do keep off the dreadful dogs, and let me git down!" cried Miss Lavender, gathering her narrow petticoats about her legs, and surveying the struggling animals before her with some dismay.

Giles's whip only reached the nearest, and the excited pack rushed forward again after every repulse; but at this juncture a tall, smartly-dressed man came across the lane, kicked the hounds out of the way, and extended a helping hand to the lady.

"Ho, Mr. Alfred!" said she; "Much obliged. Miss Ann's havin' her hands full, I reckon?"

Without waiting for an answer, she slipped into the yard and along the front of the house, to the kitchen entrance, at the eastern end. There we will leave her, and return to the group of gentlemen.

Any one could see at a glance that Mr. Alfred Barton was the most important person present. His character of host gave him, of course, the right to control the order of the coming chase; but his size and swaggering air of strength, his new style of hat, the gloss of his blue coat, the cut of his buckskin breeches, and above all, the splendor of his tasselled top-boots, distinguished him from his more homely appparelled guests. His features were large and heavy: the full, wide lips betrayed a fondness for indulgence, and the small, uneasy eyes a capacity for concealing this and any other quality which needed concealment. They were hard and cold, generally more than half hidden under thick lids, and avoided, rather than sought, the glance of the man to whom he spoke. His hair, a

mixture of red-brown and gray, descended, without a break, into bushy whiskers of the same color, and was cut shorter at the back of the head than was then customary. Something coarse and vulgar in his nature exhaled, like a powerful odor, through the assumed shell of a gentleman, which he tried to wear, and rendered the assumption useless.

A few guests, who had come from a distance, had just finished their dinner in the farm-house. Owing to causes which will hereafter be explained, they exhibited less than the usual plethoric satisfaction after the hospitality of the country, and were the first to welcome the appearance of a square black bottle, which went the rounds, with the observation: "Whet up for a start!"

Mr. Barton drew a heavy silver watch from his fob, and carefully holding it so that the handful of glittering seals could be seen by everybody, appeared to meditate.

"Five minutes to one," he said at last. "No use in waiting much longer; 't is n't good to keep the hounds fretting. Any signs of anybody else?"

The others, in response, turned towards the lane and highway. Some, with keen eyes, fancied they could detect a horseman through the wood. Presently Giles, from his perch at the door of the corn-crib, cried out:

"There 's somebody a-comin' up the meadow. I don't know the hoss; rides like Gilbert Potter. Gilbert it is, blast me! new-mounted."

"Another plough-horse!" suggested Mr. Joel Ferris, a young Pennsbury buck, who, having recently come into a legacy of four thousand pounds, wished it to be forgotten that he had never ridden any but plough-horses until within the year.

The others laughed, some contemptuously, glancing at their own well-equipped animals the while, some constrainedly, for they knew the approaching guest, and felt a slight compunction in seeming to side with Mr. Ferris. Barton

began to smile stiffly, but presently bit his lip and drew his brows together.

Pressing the handle of his riding-whip against his chin, he stared vacantly up the lane, muttering "We must wait, I suppose."

His lids were lifted in wonder the next moment; he seized Ferris by the arm, and exclaimed:—

"Whom have we here?"

• All eyes turned in the same direction, descried a dashing horseman in the lane.

"Upon my soul I don't know," said Ferris. "Anybody expected from the Fagg's Manor way?"

"Not of my inviting," Barton answered.

The other guests professed their entire ignorance of the stranger, who, having by this time passed the bars, rode directly up to the group. He was a short, broad-shouldered man of nearly forty, with a red, freckled face, keen, snapping gray eyes, and a close, wide mouth. Thick, jet-black whiskers, eyebrows and pig-tail made the glance of those eyes, the gleam of his teeth, and the color of his skin where it was not reddened by the wind, quite dazzling. This violent and singular contrast gave his plain, common features an air of distinction. Although his mulberry coat was somewhat faded, it had a jaunty cut, and if his breeches were worn and stained, the short, muscular thighs and strong knees they covered, told of a practised horseman.

He rode a large bay gelding, poorly groomed, and apparently not remarkable for blood, but with no marks of harness on his rough coat.

"Good-day to you, gentlemen!" said the stranger, familiarly knocking the handle of his whip against his cocked hat. "Squire Barton, how do you do?"

"How do you do, sir?" responded Mr. Barton, instantly flattered by the title, to which he had no legitimate right "I believe," he added, "you have the advantage of me."

A broad smile, or rather grin, spread over the stranger's face. His teeth flashed, and his eyes shot forth a bright, malicious ray. He hesitated a moment, ran rapidly over the faces of the others without perceptibly moving his head, and noting the general curiosity, said, at last: —

"I hardly expected to find an acquaintance in this neighborhood, but a chase makes quick fellowship. I happened to hear of it at the Anvil Tavern, — am on my way to the Rising Sun; so, you see, if the hunt goes down Tuffkenamon, as is likely, it's so much of a lift on the way."

"All right, — glad to have you join us. What did you say your name was?" inquired Mr. Barton.

"I did n't say what; it's Fortune, — a fortune left to me by my father, ha! ha! Don't care if I do" —

With the latter words, Fortune (as we must now call him) leaned down from his saddle, took the black bottle from the unresisting hands of Mr. Ferris, inverted it against his lips, and drank so long and luxuriously as to bring water into the mouths of the spectators. Then, wiping his mouth with the back of his freckled hand, he winked and nodded his head approvingly to Mr. Barton.

Meanwhile the other horseman had arrived from the meadow, after dismounting and letting down the bars, over which his horse stepped slowly and cautiously, — a circumstance which led some of the younger guests to exchange quiet, amused glances. Gilbert Potter, however, received a hearty greeting from all, including the host, though the latter, by an increased shyness in meeting his gaze, manifested some secret constraint.

"I was afraid I should have been too late," said Gilbert; "the old break in the hedge is stopped at last, so I came over the hill above, without thinking on the swampy bit, this side."

"Breaking your horse in to rough riding, eh?" said Mr. Ferris, touching a neighbor with his elbow.

Gilbert smiled good-humoredly, but said nothing, and a little laugh went around the circle.

Mr. Fortune seemed to understand the matter in a flash. He looked at the brown, shaggy-maned animal, standing behind its owner, with its head down, and said, in a low, sharp tone: "I see — where did you get him?"

Gilbert returned the speaker's gaze a moment before he answered. "From a drover," he then said.

"By the Lord!" ejaculated Mr. Barton, who had again conspicuously displayed his watch, "it's over half-past one. Look out for the hounds,— we must start, if we mean to do any riding this day!"

The owners of the hounds picked out their several animals and dragged them aside, in which operation they were uproariously assisted by the boys. The chase in Kennett, it must be confessed, was but a very faint shadow of the old English pastime. It had been kept up, in the neighborhood, from the force of habit in the Colonial times, and under the depression which the strong Quaker element among the people exercised upon all sports and recreations. The breed of hounds, not being restricted to close communion, had considerably degenerated, and few, even of the richer farmers, could afford to keep thoroughbred hunters for this exclusive object. Consequently all the features of the pastime had become rude and imperfect, and, although very respectable gentlemen still gave it their countenance, there was a growing suspicion that it was a questionable, if not demoralizing diversion. It would be more agreeable if we could invest the present occasion with a little more pomp and dignity; but we must describe the event precisely as it occurred.

The first to greet Gilbert were his old friends, Joe and Jake Fairthorn. These boys loudly lamented that their father had denied them the loan of his old gray mare, Bonnie; they could ride double on a gallop, they said; and would n't Gilbert take them along, one before and one behind him? But he laughed and shook his head.

"Well, we've got Watch, anyhow," said Joe, who there

upon began whispering very earnestly to Jake, as the latter seized the big family bull-dog by the collar. Gilbert foreboded mischief, and kept his eye upon the pair.

A scuffle was heard in the corn-crib, into which Giles had descended. The boys shuddered and chuckled in a state of delicious fear, which changed into a loud shout of triumph, as the soldier again made his appearance at the door, with the fox in his arms, and a fearless hand around its muzzle.

"By George! what a fine brush!" exclaimed Mr. Ferris.

A sneer, quickly disguised in a grin, ran over Fortune's face. The hounds howled and tugged; Giles stepped rapidly across the open space where the knoll sloped down to the meadow. It was a moment of intense expectation.

Just then, Joe and Jake Fairthorn let go their hold on the bull-dog's collar; but Gilbert Potter caught the animal at the second bound. The boys darted behind the corn-crib, scared less by Gilbert's brandished whip than by the wrath and astonishment in Mr. Barton's face.

"Cast him off, Giles!" the latter cried.

The fox, placed upon the ground, shot down the slope and through the fence into the meadow. Pausing then, as if first to assure himself of his liberty, he took a quick, keen survey of the ground before him, and then started off towards the left.

"He's making for the rocks!" cried Mr. Ferris; to which the stranger, who was now watching the animal with sharp interest, abruptly answered, "Hold your tongue!"

Within a hundred yards the fox turned to the right, and now, having apparently made up his mind to the course, struck away in a steady but not hurried trot. In a minute he had reached the outlying trees of the timber along the creek.

"He's a cool one, he is!" remarked Giles, admiringly

By this time he was hidden by the barn from the sight of the hounds, and they were let loose. While they darted about in eager quest of the scent, the hunters mounted in haste. Presently an old dog gave tongue like a trumpet, the pack closed, and the horsemen followed. The boys kept pace with them over the meadow, Joe and Jake taking the lead, until the creek abruptly stopped their race, when they sat down upon the bank and cried bitterly, as the last of the hunters disappeared through the thickets on the further side.

It was not long before a high picket-fence confronted the riders. Mr. Ferris, with a look of dismay, dismounted. Fortune, Barton, and Gilbert Potter each threw off a heavy "rider," and leaped their horses over the rails. The others followed through the gaps thus made, and all swept across the field at full speed, guided by the ringing cry of the hounds.

When they reached the Wilmington road, the cry swerved again to the left, and most of the hunters, with Barton at their head, took the highway in order to reach the cross-road to New-Garden more conveniently. Gilbert and Fortune alone sprang into the opposite field, and kept a straight southwestern course for the other branch of Redley Creek. The field was divided by a stout thorn-hedge from the one beyond it, and the two horsemen, careering neck and neck, glanced at each other curiously as they approached this barrier. Their respective animals were transformed; the unkempt manes were curried by the wind, as they flew; their sleepy eyes were full of fire, and the splendid muscles, aroused to complete action, marked their hides with lines of beauty. There was no wavering in either; side by side they hung in flight above the hedge, and side by side struck the clean turf beyond.

Then Fortune turned his head, nodded approvingly to Gilbert, and muttered to himself: "He's a gallant fellow,

— I'll not rob him of the brush." But he laughed a short, shrill, wicked laugh the next moment.

Before they reached the creek, the cry of the hounds ceased. They halted a moment on the bank, irresolute.

"He must have gone down towards the snuff-mill," said Gilbert, and was about to change his course.

"Stop," said the stranger; "if he has, we've lost him any way. Hark! hurrah!"

A deep bay rang from the westward, through the forest. Gilbert shouted: "The lime-quarry!" and dashed across the stream. A lane was soon reached, and as the valley opened, they saw the whole pack heading around the yellow mounds of earth which marked the locality of the quarry. At the same instant some one shouted in the rear, and they saw Mr. Alfred Barton, thundering after, and apparently bent on diminishing the distance between them.

A glance was sufficient to show that the fox had not taken refuge in the quarry, but was making a straight course up the centre of the valley. Here it was not so easy to follow. The fertile floor of Tuffkenamon, stripped of woods, was crossed by lines of compact hedge, and, moreover, the huntsmen were not free to tear and trample the springing wheat of the thrifty Quaker farmers. Nevertheless, one familiar with the ground could take advantage of a gap here and there, choose the connecting pasture-fields, and favor his course with a bit of road, when the chase swerved towards either side of the valley. Gilbert Potter soon took the lead, closely followed by Fortune. Mr. Barton was perhaps better mounted than either, but both horse and rider were heavier, and lost in the moist fields, while they gained rapidly where the turf was firm.

After a mile and a half of rather toilsome riding, all three were nearly abreast. The old tavern of the Hammer and Trowel was visible, at the foot of the northern hill; the hounds, in front, bayed in a straight line towards

Avondale Woods, — but a long slip of undrained bog made its appearance. Neither gentleman spoke, for each was silently tasking his wits how to accomplish the passage most rapidly. The horses began to sink into the oozy soil; only a very practised eye could tell where the surface was firmest, and even this knowledge was but slight advantage.

Nimbly as a cat Gilbert sprang from the saddle, still holding the pummel in his right hand, touched his horse's flank with the whip, and bounded from one tussock to another. The sagacious animal seemed to understand and assist his manœuvre. Hardly had he gained firm ground than he was in his seat again, while Mr. Barton was still plunging in the middle of the bog.

By the time he had reached the road, Gilbert shrewdly guessed where the chase would terminate. The idlers on the tavern-porch cheered him as he swept around the corner; the level highway rang to the galloping hoofs of his steed, and in fifteen minutes he had passed the long and lofty oak woods of Avondale. At the same moment, fox and hounds broke into full view, sweeping up the meadow on his left. The animal made a last desperate effort to gain a lair among the bushes and loose stones on the northern hill; but the hunter was there before him, the hounds were within reach, and one faltering moment decided his fate.

Gilbert sprang down among the frantic dogs, and saved the brush from the rapid dismemberment which had already befallen its owner. Even then, he could only assure its possession by sticking it into his hat and remounting his horse. When he looked around, no one was in sight, but the noise of hoofs was heard crashing through the wood.

Mr. Ferris, with some dozen others, either anxious to spare their horses or too timid to take the hedges in the valley, had kept the cross-road to New-Garden, whence s

lane along the top of the southern hill led them into the Avondale Woods. They soon emerged, shouting and yelling, upon the meadow.

The chase was up ; and Gilbert Potter, on his "plough-horse," was the only huntsman in at the death.

CHAPTER II.

WHO SHALL HAVE THE BRUSH?

MR. BARTON and Fortune, who seemed to have become wonderfully intimate during the half hour in which they had ridden together, arrived at the same time. The hunters, of whom a dozen were now assembled (some five or six inferior horses being still a mile in the rear), were all astounded, and some of them highly vexed, at the result of the chase. Gilbert's friends crowded about him, asking questions as to the course he had taken, and examining the horse, which had maliciously resumed its sleepy look, and stood with drooping head. The others had not sufficient tact to disguise their ill-humor, for they belonged to that class which, in all countries, possesses the least refinement — the uncultivated rich.

"The hunt started well, but it's a poor finish," said one of these.

"Never mind!" Mr. Ferris remarked; "such things come by chance."

These words struck the company to silence. A shock, felt rather than perceived, fell upon them, and they looked at each other with an expression of pain and embarrassment. Gilbert's face faded to a sallow paleness, and his eyes were fastened upon those of the speaker with a fierce and dangerous intensity. Mr. Ferris colored, turned away, and called to his hounds.

Fortune was too sharp an observer not to remark the disturbance. He cried out, and his words produced an instant, general sense of relief: —

"It's been a fine run, friends, and we can't do better

than ride back to the Hammer and Trowel, and take a 'smaller' — or a 'bigger' for that matter — at my expense. You must let me pay my footing now, for I hope to ride with you many a time to come. Faith! If I don't happen to buy that place down by the Rising Sun, I'll try to find another, somewhere about New London or Westgrove, so that we can be nearer neighbors."

With that he grinned, rather than smiled; but although his manner would have struck a cool observer as being mocking instead of cordial, the invitation was accepted with great show of satisfaction, and the horsemen fell into pairs, forming a picturesque cavalcade as they passed under the tall, leafless oaks.

Gilbert Potter speedily recovered his self-possession, but his face was stern and his manner abstracted. Even the marked and careful kindness of his friends seemed secretly to annoy him, for it constantly suggested the something by which it had been prompted. Mr. Alfred Barton, however, whether under the influence of Fortune's friendship, or from a late suspicion of his duties as host of the day, not unkindly complimented the young man, and insisted on filling his glass. Gilbert could do no less than courteously accept the attention, but he shortly afterwards stole away from the noisy company, mounted his horse, and rode slowly towards Kennett Square.

As he thus rides, with his eyes abstractedly fixed before him, we will take the opportunity to observe him more closely. Slightly under-sized, compactly built, and with strongly-marked features, his twenty-four years have the effect of thirty. His short jacket and knee-breeches of gray velveteen cover a chest broad rather than deep, and reveal the fine, narrow loins and muscular thighs of a frame matured and hardened by labor. His hands, also, are hard and strong, but not ungraceful in form. His neck, not too short, is firmly planted, and the carriage of his head indicates patience and energy. Thick, dark hair

enframes his square forehead, and straight, somewhat heavy brows. His eyes of soft dark-gray, are large, clear, and steady, and only change their expression under strong excitement. His nose is straight and short, his mouth a little too wide for beauty, and less firm now than it will be ten years hence, when the yearning tenderness shall have vanished from the corners of the lips; and the chin, in its broad curve, harmonizes with the square lines of the brow. Evidently a man whose youth has not been a holiday; who is reticent rather than demonstrative; who will be strong in his loves and long in his hates; and, without being of a despondent nature, can never become heartily sanguine.

The spring-day was raw and overcast, as it drew towards its close, and the rider's musings seemed to accord with the change in the sky. His face expressed a singular mixture of impatience, determined will, and unsatisfied desire. But where most other men would have sighed, or given way to some involuntary exclamation, he merely set his teeth, and tightened the grasp on his whip-handle.

He was not destined, however, to a solitary journey. Scarcely had he made three quarters of a mile, when, on approaching the junction of a wood-road which descended to the highway from a shallow little glen on the north, the sound of hoofs and voices met his ears. Two female figures appeared, slowly guiding their horses down the rough road. One, from her closely-fitting riding-habit of drab cloth, might have been a Quakeress, but for the feather (of the same sober color) in her beaver hat, and the rosette of dark red ribbon at her throat. The other, in bluish-gray, with a black beaver and no feather, rode a heavy old horse with a blind halter on his head, and held the stout leathern reins with a hand covered with a blue woollen mitten. She rode in advance, paying little heed to her seat, but rather twisting herself out of shape in the saddle in order to chatter to her companion in the rear.

"Do look where you are going, Sally!" cried the latter

as the blinded horse turned aside from the road to drink at a little brook that oozed forth from under the dead leaves.

Thus appealed to, the other lady whirled around with a half-jump, and caught sight of Gilbert Potter and of her horse's head at the same instant.

"Whoa there, Bonnie!" she cried. "Why, Gilbert, where did you come from? Hold up your head, I say. Martha, here's Gilbert, with a brush in his hat! Don't be afraid, you beast; did you never smell a fox? Here, ride in between, Gilbert, and tell us all about it! No, not on that side, Martha; you can manage a horse better than I can!"

In her efforts to arrange the order of march, she drove her horse's head into Gilbert's back, and came near losing her balance. With amused screams, and bursts of laughter, and light, rattling exclamations, she finally succeeded in placing herself at his left hand, while her adroit and self-possessed companion quietly rode up to his right. Then, dropping the reins on their horses' necks, the two ladies resigned themselves to conversation, as the three slowly jogged homewards abreast.

"Now, Gilbert!" exclaimed Miss Sally Fairthorn, after waiting a moment for him to speak; "did you really earn the brush, or beg it from one of them, on the way home?"

"Begging, you know, is my usual habit," he answered, mockingly.

"I know you're as proud as Lucifer, when you've a mind to be so. There!"

Gilbert was accustomed to the rattling tongue of his left-hand neighbor, and generally returned her as good as she gave. To-day, however, he was in no mood for repartee. He drew down his brows and made no answer to her charge.

"Where was the fox earthed?" asked the other lady, after a rapid glance at his face.

Martha Deane's voice was of that quality which compels an answer, and a courteous answer, from the surliest of mankind. It was not loud, it could scarcely be called musical; but every tone seemed to exhale freshness as of dew, and brightness as of morning. It was pure, slightly resonant; and all the accumulated sorrows of life could not have veiled its inherent gladness. It could never grow harsh, never be worn thin, or sound husky from weariness; its first characteristic would always be youth, and the joy of youth, though it came from the lips of age.

Doubtless Gilbert Potter did not analyze the charm which it exercised upon him; it was enough that he felt and submitted to it. A few quiet remarks sufficed to draw from him the story of the chase, in all its particulars, and the lively interest in Martha Deane's face, the boisterous glee of Sally Fairthorn, with his own lurking sense of triumph, soon swept every gloomy line from his visage. His mouth relaxed from its set compression, and wore a winning sweetness; his eyes shone softly-bright, and a nimble spirit of gayety gave grace to his movements.

"Fairly won, I must say!" exclaimed Miss Sally Fairthorn, when the narrative was finished. "And now, Gilbert, the brush?"

"The brush?"

"Who's to have it, I mean. Did you never get one before, as you don't seem to understand?"

"Yes, I understand," said he, in an indifferent tone; "it may be had for the asking."

"Then it's mine!" cried Sally, urging her heavy horse against him and making a clutch at his cap. But he leaned as suddenly away, and shot a length ahead, out of her reach. Miss Deane's horse, a light, spirited animal, kept pace with his.

"Martha!" cried the disappointed damsel, "Martha! one of us must have it; ask him, you!"

"No," answered Martha, with her clear blue eyes fixed on Gilbert's face, "I will not ask."

He returned her gaze, and his eyes seemed to say "Will you take it, knowing what the acceptance implies?"

She read the question correctly; but of this he was not sure. Neither, if it were so, could he trust himself to interpret the answer. Sally had already resumed her place on his left, and he saw that the mock strife would be instantly renewed. With a movement so sudden as to appear almost ungracious, he snatched the brush from his cap and extended it to Martha Deane, without saying a word.

If she hesitated, it was at least no longer than would be required in order to understand the action. Gilbert might either so interpret it, or suspect that she had understood the condition in his mind, and meant to signify the rejection thereof. The language of gestures is wonderfully rapid, and all that could be said by either, in this way, was over, and the brush in Martha Deane's hand, before Sally Fairthorn became aware of the transfer.

"Well-done, Martha!" she exclaimed: "Don't let him have it again! Do you know to whom he would have given it: an A. and a W., with the look of an X,—so!"

Thereupon Sally pulled off her mittens and crossed her forefingers, an action which her companions understood—in combination with the mysterious initials—to be the rude, primitive symbol of a squint.

Gilbert looked annoyed, but before he could reply, Sally let go the rein in order to put on her mittens, and the blinded mare quickly dropping her head, the rein slipped instantly to the animal's ears. The latter perceived her advantage, and began snuffing along the edges of the road in a deliberate search for spring grass. In vain Sally called and kicked; the mare provokingly preserved her independence. Finally, a piteous appeal to Gilbert, who had pretended not to notice the dilemma, and was a hundred yards in advance, was Sally's only resource. The two halted and enjoyed her comical helplessness.

"That 's enough, Gilbert," said Martha Deane, presently, "go now and pick up the rein."

He rode back, picked it up, and handed it to Sally without speaking.

"Gilbert," she said, with a sudden demure change of tone, as they rode on to where Miss Deane was waiting, "come and take supper with us, at home. Martha has promised. You 've hardly been to see us in a month."

"You know how much I have to do, Sally," he answered. "It is n't only that, to-day being a Saturday; but I 've promised mother to be at home by dark, and fetch a quarter of tea from the store."

"When you 've once promised, I know, oxen could n't pull you the other way."

"I don't often see your mother, Gilbert," said Martha Deane; "she is well?"

"Thank you, Martha, — too well, and yet not well enough."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," he answered, "that she does more than she has strength to do. If she had less she would be forced to undertake less; if she had more, she would be equal to her undertaking."

"I understand you now. But you should not allow her to go on in that way; you should" —

What Miss Deane would have said must remain unwritten. Gilbert's eyes were upon her, and held her own; perhaps a little more color came into her face, but she did not show the slightest embarrassment. A keen observer might have supposed that either a broken or an imperfect relation existed between the two, which the gentleman was trying to restore or complete without the aid of words; and that, furthermore, while the lady was the more skilful in the use of that silent language, neither rightly understood the other.

By this time they were ascending the hill from Redley

Creek to Kennett Square. Martha Deane had thus far carried the brush carelessly in her right hand; she now rolled it into a coil and thrust it into a large velvet reticule which hung from the pommel of her saddle. A few dull orange streaks in the overcast sky, behind them, denoted sunset, and a raw, gloomy twilight crept up from the east.

"You'll not go with us?" Sally asked again, as they reached the corner, and the loungers on the porch of the Unicorn Tavern beyond, perceiving Gilbert, sprang from their seats to ask for news of the chase.

"Sally, I cannot!" he answered. "Good-night!"

Joe and Jake Fairthorn rushed up with a whoop, and before Gilbert could satisfy the curiosity of the tavern-idlers, the former sat behind Sally, on the old mare, with his face to her tail, while Jake, prevented by Miss Deane's riding-whip from attempting the same performance, capered behind the horses and kept up their spirits by flinging handfuls of sand.

Gilbert found another group in "the store" — farmers or their sons who had come in for a supply of groceries, or the weekly mail, and who sat in a sweltering atmosphere around the roaring stove. They, too, had heard of the chase, and he was obliged to give them as many details as possible while his quarter of tea was being weighed, after which he left them to supply the story from the narrative of Mr. Joel Ferris, who, a new-comer announced, had just alighted at the Unicorn, a little drunk, and in a very bad humor.

"Where's Barton?" Gilbert heard some one ask of Ferris, as he mounted.

"In his skin!" was the answer, "unless he's got into that fellow Fortune's. They're as thick as two pickpockets!"

Gilbert rode down the hill, and allowed his horse to plod leisurely across the muddy level, regardless of the deepening twilight.

He was powerfully moved by some suppressed emotion. The muscles of his lips twitched convulsively, and there was a hot surge and swell somewhere in his head, as of tears about to overrun their secret reservoir. But they failed to surprise him, this time. As the first drops fell from his dark eyelashes, he loosed the rein and gave the word to his horse. Over the ridge, along the crest, between dusky thorn-hedges, he swept at full gallop, and so, slowly sinking towards the fair valley which began to twinkle with the lights of scattered farms to the eastward, he soon reached the last steep descent, and saw the gray gleam of his own barn below him.

By this time his face was sternly set. He clinched his hands, and muttered to himself —

“It will almost kill me to ask, but I must know, and — and she must tell.”

It was dark now. As he climbed again from the bottom of the hill towards the house, a figure on the summit was drawn indistinctly against the sky, unconscious that it was thus betrayed. But it vanished instantly, and then he groaned —

“God help me! I cannot ask.”

CHAPTER III.

MARY POTTER AND HER SON.

WHILE Gilbert was dismounting at the gate leading into his barn-yard, he was suddenly accosted by a boyish voice : —

“ Got back, have you ? ”

This was Sam, the “ bound-boy,” — the son of a tenant on the old Carson place, who, in consideration of three months’ schooling every winter, and a “ freedom suit ” at the age of seventeen, if he desired then to learn a trade, was duly made over by his father to Gilbert Potter. His position was something between that of a poor relation and a servant. He was one of the family, eating at the same table, sleeping, indeed, (for economy of house-work,) in the same bed with his master, and privileged to feel his full share of interest in domestic matters ; but on the other hand bound to obedience and rigid service.

“ Feed’s in the trough,” said he, taking hold of the bridle. “ I’ll fix him. Better go into th’ house. Tea’s wanted.”

Feeling as sure that all the necessary evening’s work was done as if he had performed it with his own hands, Gilbert silently followed the boy’s familiar advice.

The house, built like most other old farm-houses in that part of the county, of hornblende stone, stood near the bottom of a rounded knoll, overhanging the deep, winding valley. It was two stories in height, the gable looking towards the road, and showing, just under the broad double chimney, a limestone slab, upon which were rudely carved the initials of the builder and his wife, and the date

"1727." A low portico, overgrown with woodbine and trumpet-flower, ran along the front. In the narrow flower-bed, under it, the crocuses and daffodils were beginning to thrust up their blunt, green points. A walk of flag-stones separated them from the vegetable garden, which was bounded at the bottom by a mill-race, carrying half the water of the creek to the saw and grist mill on the other side of the road.

Although this road was the principal thoroughfare between Kennett Square and Wilmington, the house was so screened from the observation of travellers, both by the barn, and by some huge, spreading apple-trees which occupied the space between the garden and road, that its inmates seemed to live in absolute seclusion. Looking from the front door across a narrow green meadow, a wooded hill completely shut out all glimpse of the adjoining farms; while an angle of the valley, to the eastward, hid from sight the warm, fertile fields higher up the stream.

The place seemed lonelier than ever in the gloomy March twilight; or was it some other influence which caused Gilbert to pause on the flagged walk, and stand there, motionless, looking down into the meadow until a woman's shadow crossing the panes, was thrown upon the square of lighted earth at his feet? Then he turned and entered the kitchen.

The cloth was spread and the table set. A kettle, humming on a heap of fresh coals, and a squat little teapot of blue china, were waiting anxiously for the brown paper parcel which he placed upon the cloth. His mother was waiting also, in a high straight-backed rocking-chair, with her hands in her lap.

"You're tired waiting, mother, I suppose?" he said, as he hung his hat upon a nail over the heavy oak mantel-piece.

"No, not tired, Gilbert, but it's hungry *you'll* be. It

won't take long for the tea to draw. Everything else has been ready this half-hour."

Gilbert threw himself upon the settle under the front window, and mechanically followed her with his eyes, as she carefully measured the precious herb, even stooping to pick up a leaf or two that had fallen from the spoon to the floor.

The resemblance between mother and son was very striking. Mary Potter had the same square forehead and level eyebrows, but her hair was darker than Gilbert's, and her eyes more deeply set. The fire of a lifelong pain smouldered in them, and the throes of some never-ending struggle had sharpened every line of cheek and brow, and taught her lips the close, hard compression, which those of her son were also beginning to learn. She was about forty-five years of age, but there was even now a weariness in her motions, as if her prime of strength were already past. She wore a short gown of brown flannel, with a plain linen stomacher, and a coarse apron, which she removed when the supper had been placed upon the table. A simple cap, with a narrow frill, covered her head.

The entire work of the household devolved upon her hands alone. Gilbert would have cheerfully taken a servant to assist her, but this she positively refused, seeming to court constant labor, especially during his absence from the house. Only when he was there would she take occasion to knit or sew. The kitchen was a marvel of neatness and order. The bread-trough and dresser-shelves were scoured almost to the whiteness of a napkin, and the rows of pewter-plates upon the latter flashed like silver sconces. To Gilbert's eyes, indeed, the effect was sometimes painful. He would have been satisfied with less laborious order, a less eager and unwearied thrift. To be sure, all this was in furtherance of a mutual purpose; but he mentally determined that when the purpose had been

fulfilled, he would insist upon an easier and more cheerful arrangement. The stern aspect of life from which his nature craved escape met him oftenest at home.

Sam entered the kitchen barefooted, having left his shoes at the back door. The tea was drawn, and the three sat down to their supper of bacon, bread and butter, and apple-sauce. Gilbert and his mother ate and drank in silence, but Sam's curiosity was too lively to be restrained.

"I say, how did Roger go?" he asked.

Mary Potter looked up, as if expecting the question to be answered, and Gilbert said:—

"He took the lead, and kept it."

"O cracky!" exclaimed the delighted Sam.

"Then you think it's a good bargain, Gilbert. Was it a long chase? Was he well tried?"

"All right, mother. I could sell him for twenty dollars advance — even to Joel Ferris," he answered.

He then gave a sketch of the afternoon's adventures, to which his mother listened with a keen, steady interest. She compelled him to describe the stranger, Fortune, as minutely as possible, as if desirous of finding some form or event in her own memory to which he could be attached; but without result.

After supper Sam squatted upon a stool in the corner of the fireplace, and resumed his reading of "The Old English Baron," by the light of the burning back-log, pronouncing every word to himself in something between a whisper and a whistle. Gilbert took an account-book, a leaden inkstand, and a stumpy pen from a drawer under the window, and calculated silently and somewhat laboriously. His mother produced a clocked stocking of blue wool, and proceeded to turn the heel.

In half an hour's time, however, Sam's whispering ceased; his head nodded violently, and the book fell upon the hearth.

"I guess I'll go to bed," he said; and having thus con-

scientifically announced his intention, he trotted up the steep back-stairs on his hands and feet. In two minutes more, a creaking overhead announced that the act was accomplished.

Gilbert fillicked the ink out of his pen into the fire, laid it in his book, and turned away from the table.

"Roger has bottom," he said at last, "and he's as strong as a lion. He and Fox will make a good team, and the roads will be solid in three days, if it don't rain."

"Why, you don't mean," — she commenced.

"Yes, mother. You were not for buying him, I know, and you were right, inasmuch as there is always *some* risk. But it will make a difference of two barrels a load, besides having a horse at home. If I plough both for corn and oats next week, — and it will be all the better for corn, as the field next to Carson's is heavy, — I can begin hauling the week after, and we'll have the interest by the first of April, without borrowing a penny."

"That would be good, — very good, indeed," said she, dropping her knitting, and hesitating a moment before she continued; "only — only, Gilbert, I did n't expect you would be going so soon."

"The sooner I begin, mother, the sooner I shall finish."

"I know that, Gilbert. — I know that; but I'm always looking forward to the time when you won't be bound to go at all. Not that Sam and I can't manage awhile — but if the money was paid once" —

"There's less than six hundred now, altogether. It's a good deal to scrape together in a year's time, but if it can be done I will do it. Perhaps, then, you will let some help come into the house. I'm as anxious as you can be, mother. I'm not of a roving disposition, that you know; yet it is n't pleasant to me to see you slave as you do and for that very reason, it's a comfort when I'm away, that you've one less to work for."

He spoke earnestly, turning his face full upon her.

"We've talked this over, often and often, but you never can make me see it in your way," he then added, in a gentler tone.

"Ay, Gilbert," she replied, somewhat bitterly, "I've had my thoughts. Maybe they were too fast; it seems so. I meant, and mean, to make a good home for you, and I'm happiest when I can do the most towards it. I want you to hold up your head and be beholden to no man. There are them in the neighborhood that were bound out as boys, and are now as good as the best."

"But they are not," — burst from his lips, as the thought on which he so gloomily brooded sprang to the surface and took him by surprise. He checked his words by a powerful effort, and the blood forsook his face. Mary Potter placed her hand on her heart, and seemed to gasp for breath.

Gilbert could not bear to look upon her face. He turned away, placed his elbow on the table, and leaned his head upon his hand. It never occurred to him that the unfinished sentence might be otherwise completed. He knew that his *thought* was betrayed, and his heart was suddenly filled with a tumult of shame, pity, and fear.

For a minute there was silence. Only the long pendulum, swinging openly along the farther wall, ticked at each end of its vibration. Then Mary Potter drew a deep, weary breath, and spoke. Her voice was hollow and strange, and each word came as by a separate muscular effort.

"*What* are they not? What word was on your tongue, Gilbert?"

He could not answer. He could only shake his head, and bring forth a cowardly, evasive word, — "Nothing."

"But there *is* something! Oh, I knew it must come some time!" she cried, rather to herself than to him. "Listen to me, Gilbert! Has any one dared to say to your face that you are basely born?"

He felt, now, that no further evasion was possible; she had put into words the terrible question which he could not steel his own heart to ask. Perhaps it was better so, — better a sharp, intense pain than a dull perpetual ache. So he answered honestly now, but still kept his head turned away, as if there might be a kindness in avoiding her gaze.

“Not in so many words, mother,” he said; “but there are ways, and ways of saying a thing; and the cruellest way is that which everybody understands, and I dare not. But I have long known what it meant. It is ten years, mother, since I have mentioned the word ‘father’ in your hearing.”

Mary Potter leaned forward, hid her face in her hands, and rocked to and fro, as if tortured with insupportable pain. She stifled her sobs, but the tears gushed forth between her fingers.

“O my boy, — my boy!” she moaned. “Ten years! — and you believed it, all that time!”

He was silent. She leaned forward and grasped his arm.

“Did you, — *do* you believe it? Speak, Gilbert!”

When he did speak, his voice was singularly low and gentle. “Never mind, mother!” was all he could say. His head was still turned away from her, but she knew there were tears on his cheeks.

“Gilbert, it is a lie!” she exclaimed, with startling vehemence. “A lie, — A LIE! You are my lawful son, born in wedlock! There is no stain upon your name, of my giving, and I know there will be none of your own.”

He turned towards her, his eyes shining and his lips parted in breathless joy and astonishment.

“Is it — is it true?” he whispered.

“True as there is a God in Heaven.”

“Then, mother, give me my name! Now I ask you for the first time, who was my father?”

She wrung her hands and moaned. The sight of her son's eager, expectant face, touched with a light which she had never before seen upon it, seemed to give her another and a different pang.

"That, too!" She murmured to herself.

"Gilbert," she then said, "have I always been a faithful mother to you? Have I been true and honest in word and deed? Have I done my best to help you in all right ways, — to make you comfortable, to spare you trouble? Have I ever, — I'll not say acted, for nobody's judgment is perfect, — but tried to act otherwise than as I thought it might be for your good?"

"You have done all that you could say, and more, mother."

"Then, my boy, is it too much for me to ask that you should believe my word, — that you should let it stand for the truth, without my giving proofs and testimonies? For, Gilbert, that I *must* ask of you, hard as it may seem. If you will only be content with the knowledge — but then, you have felt the shame all this while; it was my fault, mine, and I ought to ask your forgiveness" —

"Mother — mother!" he interrupted, "don't talk that way! Yes — I believe you, without testimony. You never said, or thought, an untruth; and your explanation will be enough not only for me, but for the whole neighborhood, if all witnesses are dead or gone away. If you knew of the shameful report, why did n't you deny it at once? Why let it spread and be believed in?"

"Oh," she moaned again, "if my tongue was not tied — if my tongue was not tied! There was my fault, and what a punishment! Never — never was woman punished as I have been. Gilbert, whatever you do, bind yourself by no vow, except in the sight of men!"

"I do not understand you, mother," said he.

"No, and I dare not make myself understood. Don't ask me anything more! It's hard to shut my mouth and

bear everything in silence, but it cuts my very heart in twain to speak and not tell!"

Her distress was so evident, that Gilbert, perplexed and bewildered as her words left him, felt that he dared not press her further. He could not doubt the truth of her first assertion; but, alas! it availed only for his own private consciousness,—it took no stain from him, in the eyes of the world. Yet, now that the painful theme had been opened,—not less painful, it seemed, since the suspected dishonor did not exist,—he craved and decided to ask, enlightenment on one point.

"Mother," he said, after a pause, "I do not want to speak about this thing again. I believe you, and my greatest comfort in believing is for your sake, not for mine. I see, too, that you are bound in some way which I do not understand, so that we cannot be cleared from the blame that is put upon us. I don't mind that so much, either—for my own sake, and I will not ask for an explanation, since you say you dare not give it. But tell me one thing,—will it always be so? Are you bound forever, and will I never learn anything more? I can wait; but, mother, you know that these things work in a man's mind, and there will come a time when the knowledge of the worst thing that could be will seem better than no knowledge at all."

Her face brightened a little. "Thank you, Gilbert!" she said. "Yes; there will come a day when you shall know all,—when you and me shall have justice. I do not know how soon; I cannot guess. In the Lord's good time. I have nigh out-suffered my fault, I think, and the reward cannot be far off. A few weeks, perhaps,—yet, maybe, for oh, I am not allowed even to hope for it!—maybe a few years. It will all come to the light, after so long—so long—an eternity. If I had but known!"

"Come, we will say no more now. Surely I may wait a little while, when you have waited so long. I believe

you, mother. Yes, I believe you ; I am your lawful son."

She rose, placed her hands on his shoulders, and kissed him. Nothing more was said.

Gilbert raked the ashes over the smouldering embers on the hearth, lighted his mother's night-lamp, and after closing the chamber-door softly behind her, stole up-stairs to his own bed.

It was long past midnight before he slept.

CHAPTER IV.

FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE.

ON the same evening, a scene of a very different character occurred, in which certain personages of this history were actors. In order to describe it, we must return to the company of sportsmen whom Gilbert Potter left at the Hammer-and-Trowel Tavern, late in the afternoon.

No sooner had he departed than the sneers of the young bucks, who felt themselves humiliated by his unexpected success, became loud and frequent. Mr. Alfred Barton, who seemed to care little for the general dissatisfaction, was finally reproached with having introduced such an unfit personage at a gentleman's hunt; whereupon he turned impatiently, and retorted:

"There were no particular invitations sent out, as all of you know. Anybody that had a horse, and knew how to manage him, was welcome. Zounds! if you fellows are afraid to take hedges, am I to blame for that? A hunter's a hunter, though he's born on the wrong side of the marriage certificate."

"That's the talk, Squire!" cried Fortune, giving his friend a hearty slap between the shoulders. "I've seen riding in my day," he continued, "both down in Loudon and on the Eastern Shore — men born with spurs on their heels, and I tell you this Potter could hold his own, even with the Lees and the Tollivers. We took the hedge together, while you were making a round of I don't know how many miles on the road; and I never saw a thing neater done. If you thought there was anything unfair about him, why did n't you head him off?"

"Yes, damme," echoed Mr. Barton, bringing down his fist upon the bar, so that the glasses jumped, "why did n't you head him off?" Mr. Barton's face was suspiciously flushed, and he was more excited than the occasion justified.

There was no answer to the question, except that which none of the young bucks dared to make.

"Well, I've had about enough of this," said Mr. Joel Ferris, turning on his heel; "who's for home?"

"Me!" answered three or four, with more readiness than grammar. Some of the steadier young farmers, who had come for an afternoon's recreation, caring little who was first in at the death, sat awhile and exchanged opinions about crops and cattle; but Barton and Fortune kept together, whispering much, and occasionally bursting into fits of uproarious laughter. The former was so captivated by his new friend, that before he knew it every guest was gone. The landlord had lighted two or three tallow candles, and now approached with the question:

"Will you have supper, gentlemen?"

"That depends on what you've got," said Fortune.

This was not language to which the host was accustomed. His guests were also his fellow-citizens: if they patronized him, he accommodated them, and the account was balanced. His meals were as good as anybody's, though he thought it that should n't, and people so very particular might stay away. But he was a mild, amiable man, and Fortune's keen eye and dazzling teeth had a powerful effect upon him. He answered civilly, in spite of an inward protest:

"There's ham and eggs, and frizzled beef."

"Nothing could be better!" Fortune exclaimed, jumping up. "Come 'Squire — if I stay over Sunday with you, you must at least take supper at my expense."

Mr. Barton tried to recollect whether he had invited his friend to spend Sunday with him. It must be so, of course, only, he could not remember when he had spoken, or what

words he had used. It would be very pleasant, he confessed, but for one thing ; and how was he to get over the difficulty ?

However, here they were, at the table, Fortune heaping his plate like a bountiful host, and talking so delightfully about horses and hounds, and drinking-bouts, and all those wild experiences which have such a charm for bachelors of forty-five or fifty, that it was impossible to determine in his mind what he should do.

After the supper, they charged themselves with a few additional potations, to keep off the chill of the night air, mounted their horses, and took the New-Garden road. A good deal of confidential whispering had preceded their departure.

"They 're off on a lark," the landlord remarked to himself, as they rode away, "and it 's a shame, in men of their age."

After riding a mile, they reached the cross-road on the left, which the hunters had followed, and Fortune, who was a little in advance, turned into it.

"After what I told you, 'Squire," said he, "you won't wonder that I know the country so well. Let us push on ; it's not more than two miles. I would be very clear of showing you one of my nests, if you were not such a good fellow. But mum 's the word, you know."

"Never fear," Barton answered, somewhat thickly ; "I'm an old bird, Fortune."

"That you are ! Men like you and me are not made of the same stuff as those young nincompoops ; we can follow a trail without giving tongue at every jump."

Highly flattered, Barton rode nearer, and gave his friend an affectionate punch in the side. Fortune answered with an arm around his waist and a tight hug, and so they rode onward through the darkness.

They had advanced for somewhat more than a mile on the cross-road, and found themselves in a hollow, with tall,

dense woods on either side. Fortune drew rein and listened. There was no wind going, and the utmost stillness prevailed in every direction. There was something awful in the gloom and solitude of the forest, and Barton, in spite of his anticipations, began to feel uncomfortable.

"Good, so far!" said Fortune, at last. "Here we leave the road, and I must strike a light."

"Won't it be seen?" Barton anxiously inquired.

"No: it's a dark-lantern — a most convenient thing. I would advise you to get one."

With that, he fumbled in his holsters and produced a small object, together with a tinder-box, and swiftly and skilfully struck a light. There was a little blue flash, as of sulphur, the snap of a spring, and the gleam disappeared.

"Stay!" he said, after satisfying himself that the lantern was in order. "I must know the time. Let me have your watch a minute."

Barton hauled up the heavy article from the depths of his fob, and handed it, with the bunch of jingling seals, to his friend. The latter thrust it into his waistcoat pocket, before opening the lantern, and then seemed to have forgotten his intention, for he turned the light suddenly on Barton's face.

"Now," said he, in a sharp tone, "I 'll trouble you, 'Squire, for the fifty dollars young Ferris paid you before the start, and whatever other loose change you have about you."

Barton was so utterly astounded that the stranger's words conveyed no meaning to his ears. He sat with fixed eyes, open mouth, and hanging jaws, and was conscious only that the hair was slowly rising upon his head.

There was a rustling in one of Fortune's holsters, followed by a mysterious double click. The next moment, the lantern illumined a long, bright pistol-barrel, which pointed towards the victim's breast, and caused him to feel a sharp, wasp-like sting on that side of his body.

"Be quick, now! Hand over the money!" cried Fortune, thrusting the pistol an inch nearer.

With trembling hands, Barton took a pocket-book and purse of mole-skin from his breast, and silently obeyed. The robber put up the pistol, took the ring of the lantern in his teeth, and rapidly examined the money.

"A hundred and twenty-five!" he said, with a grin, — "not a bad haul."

"Fortune!" stammered Barton, in a piteous voice, "this is a joke, is n't it?"

"O yes, ha! ha! — a very good joke, — a stroke of fortune for you! Look here!"

He turned full upon his face the lantern which he held in his left hand, while with the right he snatched off his hat, and — as it seemed to Barton's eyes — the greater part of his head. But it was only his black hair and whiskers, which vanished in the gloom, leaving a round, smooth face, and a head of close-cropped, red hair. With his wicked eyes and shining teeth, Barton imagined that he beheld a devil.

"Did you ever hear of Sandy Flash?" said the robber.

The victim uttered a cry and gave himself up for lost. This was the redoubtable highwayman — the terror of the county — who for two years had defied the law and all its ordinary and extraordinary agents, scouring the country at his will between the Schuylkill and the Susquehanna, and always striking his blows where no one expected them to fall. This was he in all his dreadful presence, — a match for any twenty men, so the story went, — and he, Alfred Barton, was in his clutches! A cold sweat broke out over his whole body; his face grew deadly pale, and his teeth chattered.

The highwayman looked at him and laughed. "Sorry I can't spend Sunday with you," said he; "I must go on towards the Rising Sun. When you get another fox, send me word." Then he leaned over, nearer the trembling victim,

and added in a low, significant tone, "If you stir from **this** spot in less than one hour, you are a dead man."

Then he rode on, whistling "Money Musk" as he went. Once or twice he stopped, as if to listen, and Barton's heart ceased to beat; but by degrees the sound of his horse's hoofs died away. The silence that succeeded was full of terrors. Barton's horse became restive, and he would have dismounted and held him, but for the weakness in every joint which made him think that his body was falling asunder. Now and then a leaf rustled, or the scent of some animal, unperceived by his own nostrils, caused his horse to snort and stamp. The air was raw and sent a fearful chill through his blood. Moreover, how was he to measure the hour? His watch was gone; he might have guessed by the stars, but the sky was overcast. Fortune and Sandy Flash—for there were two individuals in his bewildered brain—would surely fulfil their threat if he stirred before the appointed time. What under heaven should he do?

Wait; that was all; and he waited until it seemed that morning must be near at hand. Then, turning his horse, he rode back very slowly towards the New-Garden road, and after many panics, to the Hammer-and-Trowel. There was still light in the bar-room; should the door open, he would be seen. He put spurs to his horse and dashed past. Once in motion, it seemed that he was pursued, and along Tuffkenamon went the race, until his horse, panting and exhausted, paused to drink at Redley Creek. They had gone to bed at the Unicorn; he drew a long breath, and felt that the danger was over. In five minutes more he was at home.

Putting his horse in the stable, he stole quietly to the house, pulled off his boots in the wood-shed, and entered by a back way through the kitchen. Here he warmed his chill frame before the hot ashes, and then very gently and cautiously felt his way to bed in the dark.

The next morning, being Sunday, the whole household, servants and all, slept an hour later than usual, as was then the country custom. Giles, the old soldier, was the first to appear. He made the fire in the kitchen, put on the water to boil, and then attended to the feeding of the cattle at the barn. When this was accomplished, he returned to the house and entered a bedroom adjoining the kitchen, on the ground-floor. Here slept "Old-man Barton," as he was generally called, — Alfred's father, by name Abiah, and now eighty-five years of age. For many years he had been a paralytic and unable to walk, but the disease had not affected his business capacity. He was the hardest, shrewdest, and cunningest miser in the county. There was not a penny of the income and expenditure of the farm, for any year, which he could not account for, — not a date of a deed, bond, or note of hand, which he had ever given or received, that was not indelibly burnt upon his memory. No one, not even his sons, knew precisely how much he was worth. The old lawyer in Chester, who had charge of much of his investments, was as shrewd as himself, and when he made his annual visit, the first week in April, the doors were not only closed, but everybody was banished from hearing distance so long as he remained.

Giles assisted in washing and dressing the old man, then seated him in a rude arm-chair, resting on clumsy wooden castors, and poured out for him a small wine-glass full of raw brandy. Once or twice a year, usually after the payment of delayed interest, Giles received a share of the brandy; but he never learned to expect it. Then a long hickory staff was placed in the old man's hand, and his arm-chair was rolled into the kitchen, to a certain station between the fire and the southern window, where he would be out of the way of his daughter Ann, yet could measure with his eye every bit of lard she put into the frying-pan, and every spoonful of molasses that entered into the composition of her pies.

She had already set the table for breakfast. The bacon and sliced potatoes were frying in separate pans, and Ann herself was lifting the lid of the tin coffee-pot, to see whether the beverage had "come to a boil," when the old man entered, or, strictly speaking, *was* entered.

As his chair rolled into the light, the hideousness, not the grace and serenity of old age, was revealed. His white hair, thin and half-combed, straggled over the dark-red, purple-veined skin of his head; his cheeks were flabby bags of bristly, wrinkled leather; his mouth was a sunken, irregular slit, losing itself in the hanging folds at the corners, and even the life, gathered into his small, restless gray eyes, was half quenched under the red and heavy edges of the lids. The third and fourth fingers of his hands were crooked upon the skinny palms, beyond any power to open them.

When Ann — a gaunt spinster of fifty-five — had placed the coffee on the table, the old man looked around, and asked with a snarl: "Where 's Alfred?"

"Not up yet, but you need n't wait, father."

"Wait?" was all he said, yet she understood the tone, and wheeled him to the table. As soon as his plate was filled, he bent forward over it, rested his elbows on the cloth, and commenced feeding himself with hands that trembled so violently that he could with great difficulty bring the food to his mouth. But he resented all offers of assistance, which implied any weakness beyond that of the infirmity which it was impossible for him to conceal. His meals were weary tasks, but he shook and jerked through them, and would have gone away hungry rather than acknowledge the infirmity of his great age.

Breakfast was nearly over before Alfred Barton made his appearance. No truant school-boy ever dreaded the master's eye as he dreaded to appear before his father that Sunday morning. His sleep had been broken and restless, the teeth of Sandy Flash had again grinned at him in

nightmare-dreams, and when he came to put on his clothes, the sense of emptiness in his breast-pocket and watch-fob impressed him like a violent physical pain. His loss was bad enough, but the inability to conceal it caused him even greater distress.

Buttoning his coat over the double void, and trying to assume his usual air, he went down to the kitchen and commenced his breakfast. Whenever he looked up, he found his father's eyes fixed upon him, and before a word had been spoken, he felt that he had already betrayed something, and that the truth would follow, sooner or later. A wicked wish crossed his mind, but was instantly suppressed, for fear lest that, also, should be discovered.

After Ann had cleared the table, and retired to her own room in order to array herself in the black cloth gown which she had worn every Sunday for the past fifteen years, the old man said, or rather wheezed out the words, —

“Kennett, meetin’?”

“Not to-day,” said his son, “I’ve a sort of chill from yesterday.” And he folded his arms and shivered very naturally.

“Did Ferris pay you?” the old man again asked.

“Y—yes.”

“Where’s the money?”

There was the question, and it must be faced. Alfred Barton worked the farm “on shares,” and was held to a strict account by his father, not only for half of all the grain and produce sold, but of all the horses and cattle raised, as well as those which were bought on speculation. On his share he managed — thanks to the niggardly system enforced in the house — not only to gratify his vulgar taste for display, but even to lay aside small sums from time to time. It was a convenient arrangement, but might be annulled any time when the old man should choose, and Alfred knew that a prompt division of the profits would be his surest guarantee of permanence.

"I have not the money with me," he answered, desperately, after a pause, during which he felt his father's gaze travelling over him, from head to foot.

"Why not! You have n't spent it?" The latter question was a croaking shriek, which seemed to forebode, while it scarcely admitted, the possibility of such an enormity.

"I spent only four shillings, father, but — but — but the money's all gone!"

The crooked fingers clutched the hickory staff, as if eager to wield it; the sunken gray eyes shot forth angry fire, and the broken figure uncurved and straightened itself with a wrathful curiosity.

"Sandy Flash robbed me on the way home," said the son, and now that the truth was out, he seemed to pluck up a little courage.

"What, what, what!" chattered the old man, incredulously; "no lies, boy, no lies!"

The son unbuttoned his coat, and showed his empty watch-fob. Then he gave an account of the robbery, not strictly correct in all its details, but near enough for his father to know, without discovering inaccuracies at a later day. The hickory-stick was shaken once or twice during the recital, but it did not fall upon the culprit — though this correction (so the gossip of the neighborhood ran) had more than once been administered within the previous ten years. As Alfred Barton told his story, it was hardly a case for anger on the father's part, so he took his revenge in another way.

"This comes o' your races and your expensive company, he growled, after a few incoherent sniffs and snarls; "but I don't lose my half of the horse. No, no! I'm not paid till the money's been handed over. Twenty-five dollars, remember! — and soon, that I don't lose the use of it too long. As for *your* money and the watch, I've nothing to do with them. I've got along without a watch for eighty-

five years, and I never wore as smart a coat as that in my born days. Young men understood how to save, in *my* time."

Secretly, however, the old man was flattered by his son's love of display, and enjoyed his swaggering air, although nothing would have induced him to confess the fact. His own father had come to Pennsylvania as a servant of one of the first settlers, and the reverence which he had felt, as a boy, for the members of the Quaker and farmer aristocracy of the neighborhood, had now developed into a late vanity to see his own family acknowledged as the equals of the descendants of the former. Alfred had long since discovered that when he happened to return home from the society of the Falconers, or the Caswells, or the Carsons, the old man was in an unusual good-humor. At such times, the son felt sure that he was put down for a large slice of the inheritance.

After turning the stick over and over in his skinny hands, and pressing the top of it against his toothless gums, the old man again spoke.

"See here, you 're old enough now to lead a steady life. You might ha' had a farm o' your own, like Elisha, if you'd done as well. A very fair bit o' money he married, — very fair, — but I don't say you could n't do as well, or, maybe, better."

"I 've been thinking of that, myself," the son replied.

"Have you? Why don't you step up to her then? Ten thousand dollars are n't to be had every day, and you need n't expect to get it without the askin'! Where molasses is dropped, you 'll always find more than one fly. Others than you have got their eyes on the girl."

The son's eyes opened tolerably wide when the old man began to speak, but a spark of intelligence presently flashed into them, and an expression of cunning ran over his face.

"Don't be anxious, daddy!" said he, with assumed playfulness; "she 's not a girl to take the first that offers

She has a mind of her own, — with her the more haste the less speed. I know what I'm about; I have my top eye open, and when there's a good chance, you won't find me sneaking behind the wood-house."

"Well, well!" muttered the old man, "we'll see, — we'll see! A good family, too, — not that I care for that. My family's as good as the next. But if you let her slip, boy" — and here he brought down the end of his stick with a significant whack, upon the floor. "This I'll tell you," he added, without finishing the broken sentence, "that whether you're a rich man or a beggar, depends on yourself. The more you have, the more you'll get; remember that! Bring me my brandy!"

Alfred Barton knew the exact value of his father's words. Having already neglected, or, at least, failed to succeed, in regard to two matches which his father had proposed, he understood the risk to his inheritance which was implied by a third failure. And yet, looking at the subject soberly, there was not the slightest prospect of success. Martha Deane was the girl in the old man's mind, and an instinct, stronger than his vanity, told him that she never would, or could, be his wife. But, in spite of that, it must be his business to create a contrary impression, and keep it alive as long as possible, — perhaps until — until —

We all know what was in his mind. Until the old man should die.

CHAPTER V.

GUESTS AT FAIRTHORN'S.

THE Fairthorn farm was immediately north of Kennett Square. For the first mile towards Unionville, the rich rolling fields which any traveller may see, to this day, on either side of the road, belonged to it. The house stood on the right, in the hollow into which the road dips, on leaving the village. Originally a large cabin of hewn logs, it now rejoiced in a stately stone addition, overgrown with ivy up to the eaves, and a long porch in front, below which two mounds of box guarded the flight of stone steps leading down to the garden. The hill in the rear kept off the north wind, and this garden caught the earliest warmth of spring. Nowhere else in the neighborhood did the crocuses bloom so early, or the peas so soon appear above ground. The lack of order, the air of old neglect about the place, in nowise detracted from its warm, cosy character; it was a pleasant nook, and the relatives and friends of the family (whose name was Legion) always liked to visit there.

Several days had elapsed since the chase, and the eventful evening which followed it. It was baking-day, and the plump arms of Sally Fairthorn were floury-white up to the elbows. She was leaning over the dough-trough, plunging her fists furiously into the spongy mass, when she heard a step on the porch. Although her gown was pinned up, leaving half of her short, striped petticoat visible, and a blue and white spotted handkerchief concealed her dark hair, Sally did not stop to think of that. She rushed into

the front room, just as a gaunt female figure passed the window, at the sight of which she clapped her hands so that the flour flew in a little white cloud, and two or three strips of dough peeled off her arms and fell upon the floor.

The front-door opened, and our old friend, Miss Betsy Lavender, walked into the room.

Any person, between Kildeer Hill and Hockessin, who did not know Miss Betsy, must have been an utter stranger to the country, or an idiot. She had a marvellous clairvoyant faculty for the approach of either Joy or Grief, and always turned up just at the moment when she was most wanted. Profession had she none; neither a permanent home, but for twenty years she had wandered hither and thither, in highly independent fashion, turning her hand to whatever seemed to require its cunning. A better house-keeper never might have lived, if she could have stuck to one spot; an admirable cook, nurse, seamstress, and spinner, she refused alike the high wages of wealthy farmers and the hands of poor widowers. She had a little money of her own, but never refused payment from those who were able to give it, in order that she might now and then make a present of her services to poorer friends. Her speech was blunt and rough, her ways odd and eccentric; her name was rarely mentioned without a laugh, but those who laughed at her esteemed her none the less. In those days of weekly posts and one newspaper, she was Politics, Art, Science, and Literature to many families.

In person, Miss Betsy Lavender was peculiar rather than attractive. She was nearly, if not quite fifty years of age, rather tall, and a little stoop-shouldered. Her face, at first sight, suggested that of a horse, with its long, ridged nose, loose lips and short chin. Her eyes were dull gray, set near together, and much sharper in their operation than a stranger would suppose. Over a high, narrow forehead she wore thin bands of tan-colored hair, somewhat grizzled.

and forming a coil at the back of her head, barely strong enough to hold the teeth of an enormous tortoise-shell comb. Yet her grotesqueness had nothing repellant; it was a genial caricature, at which no one could take offence.

"The very person I wanted to see!" cried Sally. "Father and mother are going up to Uncle John's this afternoon; Aunt Eliza has an old woman's quilting-party, and they'll stay all night, and however am I to manage Joe and Jake by myself? Martha's half promised to come, but not till after supper. It will all go right, since you are here; come into mother's room and take off your things!"

"Well," said Miss Betsy, with a snort, "*that's* to be my business, eh? I'll have my hands full; a pearter couple o' lads a'n't to be found this side o' Nottin'gam. They might ha' growed up wild on the Barrens, for all the manners they've got."

Sally knew that this criticism was true; also that Miss Betsy's task was no sinecure, and she therefore thought it best to change the subject.

"There!" said she, as Miss Betsy gave the thin rope of her back hair a fierce twist, and jammed her high comb inward and outward that the teeth might catch, — "there! now you'll do! Come into the kitchen and tell me the news, while I set my loaves to rise."

"Loaves to rise," echoed Miss Betsy, seating herself on a tall, rush-bottomed chair near the window. She had an incorrigible habit of repeating the last three words of the person with whom she spoke, — a habit which was sometimes mimicked good-humoredly, even by her best friends. Many persons, however, were flattered by it, as it seemed to denote an earnest attention to what they were saying. Between the two, there it was and there it would be, to the day of her death, — Miss Lavender's "keel¹-mark, as the farmers said of their sheep.

¹ Keel, a local term for red chalk.

"Well," she resumed, after taking breath, "no news in good news, these days. Down Whitely Creek way, towards Strickersville, there's fever, they say; Richard Rudd talks o' buildin' higher up the hill,—you know it's low and swampy about the old house,—but Sarah, she says it'll be a mortal long ways to the spring-house, and so betwixt and between them I dunno how it'll turn out. Dear me! I was up at Aunt Buffin'ton's t'other day; she's lookin' poorly; her mother, I remember, went off in a decline, the same year the Tories burnt down their barn, and I'm afeard she's goin' the same way. But, yes! I guess there's one thing you'll like to hear. Old-man Barton is goin' to put up a new wagon-house, and Mark is to have the job."

"Law!" exclaimed Sally, "what's that to me?" But there was a decided smile on her face as she put another loaf into the pan, and, although her head was turned away, a pretty flush of color came up behind her ear, and betrayed itself to Miss Lavender's quick eye.

"Nothin' much, I reckon," the latter answered, in the most matter-of-fact way, "only I thought you might like to know it, Mark bein' a neighbor, like, and a right-down smart young fellow."

"Well, I *am* glad of it," said Sally, with sudden candor, "he's Martha's cousin."

"Martha's cousin,—and I should n't wonder if he'd be something more to her, some day."

"No, indeed! What are you thinking of, Betsy?" Sally turned around and faced her visitor, regardless that her soft brunette face showed a decided tinge of scarlet. At this instant clattering feet were heard, and Joe and Jake rushed into the kitchen. They greeted their old friend with boisterous demonstrations of joy.

"Now we'll have dough-nuts," cried Joe.

"No; 'lasses-wax!" said Jake. "Sally, where's mother! Dad's out at the wall, and Bonnie's jumpin' and prancin' like anything!"

"Go along!" exclaimed Sally, with a slap which lost its force in the air, as Jake jumped away. Then they all left the kitchen together, and escorted the mother to the garden-wall by the road, which served the purpose of a horse-block. Farmer Fairthorn—a hale, ruddy, honest figure, in broad-brimmed hat, brown coat and knee-breeches—already sat upon the old mare, and the pillion behind his saddle awaited the coming burden. Mother Fairthorn, a cheery little woman, with dark eyes and round brunette face, like her daughter, wore the scoop bonnet and drab shawl of a Quakeress, as did many in the neighborhood who did not belong to the sect. Never were people better suited to each other than these two: they took the world as they found it, and whether the crops were poor or abundant, whether money came in or had to be borrowed, whether the roof leaked, or a broken pale let the sheep into the garden, they were alike easy of heart, contented and cheerful.

The mare, after various obstinate whirls, was finally brought near the wall; the old woman took her seat on the pillion, and after a parting admonition to Sally: "Rake the coals and cover 'em up, before going to bed, whatever you do!"—they went off, deliberately, up the hill.

"Miss Betsy," said Joe, with a very grave air, as they returned to the kitchen, "I want you to tell me one thing—whether it's true or not. Sally says I'm a monkey."

"I'm a monkey," repeated the unconscious Miss Lavender, whereupon both boys burst into shrieks of laughter, and made their escape.

"Much dough-nuts they 'll get from me," muttered the ruffled spinster, as she pinned up her sleeves and proceeded to help Sally. The work went on rapidly, and by the middle of the afternoon, the kitchen wore its normal aspect of homely neatness. Then came the hour or two of quiet and rest, nowhere in the world so grateful as in a country farm-house, to its mistress and her daughters, when all the

rough work of the day is over, and only the lighter task of preparing supper yet remains. Then, when the sewing or knitting has been produced, the little painted-pine work-stand placed near the window, and a pleasant neighbor drops in to enliven the softer occupation with gossip, the country wife or girl finds her life a very happy and cheerful possession. No dresses are worn with so much pleasure as those then made; no books so enjoyed as those then read, a chapter or two at a time.

Sally Fairthorn, we must confess, was not in the habit of reading much. Her education had been limited. She had ciphered as far as Compound Interest, read Murray's "Sequel," and Goldsmith's "Rome," and could write a fair letter, without misspelling many words; but very few other girls in the neighborhood possessed greater accomplishments than these, and none of them felt, or even thought of, their deficiencies. There were no "missions" in those days; it was fifty or sixty years before the formation of the "Kennett Psychological Society," and "Pamela," "Rasselas," and "Joseph Andrews," were lent and borrowed, as at present "Consuelo," Buckle, Ruskin; and "Enoch Arden."

One single work of art had Sally created, and it now hung, stately in a frame of curled maple, in the chilly parlor. It was a sampler, containing the alphabet, both large and small, the names and dates of birth of both her parents, a harp and willow-tree, the twigs whereof were represented by parallel rows of "herring-bone" stitch, a sharp zigzag spray of rose-buds, and the following stanza, placed directly underneath the harp and willow:—

" By Babel's streams we Sat and Wept
When Zion we thought on:
For Grief thereof, we Hang our Harp
The Willow Tree upon."

Across the bottom of the sampler was embroidered the inscription: "Done by Sarah Ann Fairthorn, May, 1792, in the 16th year of her age."

While Sally went up-stairs to her room, to put her hair into order, and tie a finer apron over her cloth gown, Miss Betsy Lavender was made the victim of a most painful experience.

Joe and Jake, who had been dodging around the house, half-coaxing and half-teasing the ancient maiden whom they both plagued and liked, had not been heard or seen for a while. Miss Betsy was knitting by the front window, waiting for Sally, when the door was hastily thrown open, and Joe appeared, panting, scared, and with an expression of horror upon his face.

"Oh, Miss Betsy!" was his breathless exclamation, "Jake! the cherry-tree!"

Dropping her work upon the floor, Miss Lavender hurried out of the house, with beating heart and trembling limbs, following Joe, who ran towards the field above the barn, where, near the fence, there stood a large and lofty cherry-tree. As she reached the fence she beheld Jake, lying motionless on his back, on the brown grass.

"The Lord have mercy!" she cried; her knees gave way, and she sank upon the ground in an angular heap. When, with a desperate groan, she lifted her head and looked through the lower rails, Jake was not to be seen. With a swift, convulsive effort she rose to her feet, just in time to catch a glimpse of the two young scamps whirling over the farther fence into the wood below.

She walked unsteadily back to the house. "It's given me such a turn," she said to Sally, after describing the trick, "that I dunno when I'll get over it."

Sally gave her some whiskey and sugar, which soon brought a vivid red to the tip of her chin and the region of her cheek-bones, after which she professed that she felt very comfortable. But the boys, frightened at the effect of their thoughtless prank, did not make their appearance. Joe, seeing Miss Betsy fall, thought she was dead, and the two hid themselves in a bed of dead leaves, beside a fallen

log, not daring to venture home for supper. Sally said they should have none, and would have cleared the table; but Miss Betsy, whose kind heart had long since relented, went forth and brought them to light, promising that she would not tell their father, provided they "would never do such a wicked thing again." Their behavior, for the rest of the evening, was irreproachable.

Just as candles were being lighted, there was another step on the porch, and the door opened on Martha Deane.

"I'm *so* glad!" cried Sally. "Never mind your patens, Martha; Joe shall carry them into the kitchen. Come, let me take off your cloak and hat."

Martha's coming seemed to restore the fading daylight. Not boisterous or impulsive, like Sally, her nature burned with a bright and steady flame, — white and cold to some, golden and radiant to others. Her form was slender, and every motion expressed a calm, serene grace, which could only spring from some conscious strength of character. Her face was remarkably symmetrical, its oval outline approaching the Greek ideal; but the brow was rather high than low, and the light brown hair covered the fair temples evenly, without a ripple. Her eyes were purely blue, and a quick, soft spark was easily kindled in their depths; the cheeks round and rosy, and the mouth clearly and delicately cut, with an unusual, yet wholly feminine firmness in the lines of the upper lip. This peculiarity, again, if slightly out of harmony with the pervading gentleness of her face, was balanced by the softness and sweetness of her dimpled chin, and gave to her face a rare union of strength and tenderness. It very rarely happens that decision and power of will in a young woman are not manifested by some characteristic rather masculine than feminine; but Martha Deane knew the art of unwearied, soft assertion and resistance, and her beautiful lips could pronounce, when necessary, a final word.

Joe and Jake came forward with a half-shy delight, to

welcome "Cousin Martha," as she was called in the Fairthorn household, her mother and Sally's father having been "own" cousins. There was a cheerful fire on the hearth, and the three ladies gathered in front of it, with the work-stand in the middle, while the boys took possession of the corner-nooks. The latter claimed their share of the gossip; they knew the family histories of the neighborhood much better than their school-books, and exhibited a precocious interest in this form of knowledge. The conversation, therefore, was somewhat guarded, and the knitting and sewing all the more assiduously performed, until, with great reluctance, and after repeated commands, Joe and Jake stole off to bed.

The atmosphere of the room then became infinitely more free and confidential. Sally dropped her hands in her lap, and settled herself more comfortably in her chair, while Miss Lavender, with an unobserved side-glance at her, said:—

"Mark is to put up Barton's new wagon-house, I hear, Martha."

"Yes," Martha answered; "it is not much, but Mark, of course, is very proud of his first job. There is a better one in store, though he does not know of it."

Sally pricked up her ears. "What is it?" asked Miss Betsy.

"It is not to be mentioned, you will understand. I saw Alfred Barton to-day. He seems to take quite an interest in Mark, all at once, and he told me that the Hallowells are going to build a new barn this summer. He spoke to them of Mark, and thinks the work is almost sure."

"Well, now!" Miss Betsy exclaimed, "if he gets that, after a year's journey-work, Mark is a made man. And I'll speak to Richard Rudd the next time I see him. He thinks he's beholden to me, since Sarah had the fever so bad. I don't like folks to think that, but there's times when it appears to come handy."

Sally arose, flushed and silent, and brought a plate of cakes and a basket of apples from the pantry. The work was now wholly laid aside, and the stand cleared to receive the refreshments.

"Now pare your peels in one piece, girls," Miss Betsy advised, "and then whirl 'em to find the *itials* o' your sweethearts' names."

"You, too, Miss Betsy!" cried Sally, "we must find out the widower's name!"

"The widower's name," Miss Betsy gravely repeated, as she took a knife.

With much mirth the parings were cut, slowly whirled three times around the head, and then let fly over the left shoulder. Miss Betsy's was first examined and pronounced to be an A.

"Who 's A?" she asked.

"Alfred!" said Sally. "Now, Martha, here 's yours — an S, no it 's a G!"

"The curl is the wrong way," said Martha, gravely, "it 's a figure 3; so, I have three of them, have I?"

"And mine," Sally continued, "is a W!"

"Yes, if you look at it upside down. The inside of the peel is uppermost: you must turn it, and then it will be an M."

Sally snatched it up in affected vexation, and threw it into the fire. "Oh, I know a new way!" she cried; "did you ever try it, Martha — with the key and the Bible!"

"Old as the hills, but awful sure," remarked Miss Lavender. "When it 's done serious, it 's never been known to fail."

Sally took the house-key, and brought from the old walnut cabinet a plump octavo Bible, which she opened at the Song of Solomon, eighth chapter and sixth verse. The end of the key being carefully placed therein, the halves of the book were bound together with cords, so that it could be carried by the key-handle. Then Sally and Mar

tha, sitting face to face, placed each the end of the fore finger of the right hand under the half the ring of the key nearest to her.

"Now, Martha," said Sally, "we'll try your fortune first. Say 'A,' and then repeat the verse: 'set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.'"

Martha did as she was bidden, but the book hung motionless. She was thereupon directed to say B, and repeat the verse; and so on, letter by letter. The slender fingers trembled a little with the growing weight of the book, and, although Sally protested that she was holding as still "as she knew how," the trembling increased, and before the verse which followed G had been finished, the ring of the key slowly turned, and the volume fell to the floor.

Martha picked it up with a quiet smile.

"It is easy to see who was in *your* mind, Sally," she said. "Now let me tell your fortune: we will begin at L—it will save time."

"Save time," said Miss Lavender, rising. "Have it out betwixt and between you, girls: I'm a-goin' to bed."

The two girls soon followed her example. Hastily undressing themselves in the chilly room, they lay down side by side, to enjoy the blended warmth and rest, and the tender, delicious interchanges of confidence which precede sleep. Though so different in every fibre of their natures, they loved each other with a very true and tender affection.

"Martha," said Sally, after an interval of silence, "did you think I *made* the Bible turn at G?"

"I think you thought it would turn, and therefore it did. Gilbert Potter was in your mind, of course."

"And not in yours, Martha?"

"If any man was seriously in my mind, Sally, do you think I would take the Bible and the door-key in order to find out his name?"

Sally was not adroit in speech : she felt that her question had not been answered, but was unable to see precisely how the answer had been evaded.

"I certainly was beginning to think that you liked Gilbert," she said.

"So I do. Anybody may know that who cares for the information." And Martha laughed cheerfully.

"Would you say so to Gilbert himself?" Sally timidly suggested.

"Certainly; but why should he ask? I like a great many young men."

"Oh, Martha!"

"Oh, Sally! — and so do you. But there's this I will say: if I were to love a man, neither he nor any other living soul should know it, until he had told me with his own lips that his heart had chosen me."

The strength of conviction in Martha's grave, gentle voice, struck Sally dumb. Her lips were sealed on the delicious secret she was longing, and yet afraid, to disclose. *He* had not spoken: she hoped he loved her, she was sure she loved him. Did she speak now, she thought, she would lower herself in Martha's eyes. With a helpless impulse, she threw one arm over the latter's neck, and kissed her cheek. She did not know that with the kiss she had left a tear.

"Sally," said Martha, in a tender whisper, "I only spoke for myself. Some hearts must be silent, while it is the nature of others to speak out. You are not afraid of me: it will be womanly in you to tell me everything. Your cheek is hot: you are blushing. Don't blush, Sally dear, for I know it already."

Sally answered with an impassioned demonstration of gratitude and affection. Then she spoke; but we will not reveal the secrets of her virgin heart. It is enough that, soothed and comforted by Martha's wise counsel and sympathy, she sank into happy slumber at her side.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW GILBERT.

THIS time the weather, which so often thwarts the farmer's calculations, favored Gilbert Potter. In a week the two fields were ploughed, and what little farm-work remained to be done before the first of April, could be safely left to Sam. On the second Monday after the chase, therefore, he harnessed his four sturdy horses to the wagon, and set off before the first streak of dawn for Columbia, on the Susquehanna. Here he would take from twelve to sixteen barrels of flour (according to the state of the roads) and haul them, a two days' journey, to Newport, on the Christiana River. The freight of a dollar and a half a barrel, which he received, yielded him what in those days was considered a handsome profit for the service, and it was no unusual thing for farmers who were in possession of a suitable team, to engage in the business whenever they could spare the time from their own fields.

Since the evening when she had spoken to him, for the first time in her life, of the dismal shadow which rested upon their names, Mary Potter felt that there was an indefinable change in her relation to her son. He seemed suddenly drawn nearer to her, and yet, in some other sense which she could not clearly comprehend, thrust farther away. His manner, always kind and tender, assumed a shade of gentle respect, grateful in itself, yet disturbing, because new in her experience of him. His head was slightly lifted, and his lips, though firm as ever, less rigidly compressed. She could not tell how it was, but his voice

had more authority in her ears. She had never before quite disentangled the man that he was from the child that he had been; but now the separation, sharp, sudden, and final, was impressed upon her mind. Under all the loneliness which came upon her, when the musical bells of his team tinkled into silence beyond the hill, there lurked a strange sense of relief, as if her nature would more readily adjust itself during his absence.

Instead of accepting the day with its duties, as a sufficient burden, she now deliberately reviewed the Past. It would give her pain, she knew; but what pain could she ever feel again, comparable to that which she had so recently suffered? Long she brooded over that bitter period before and immediately succeeding her son's birth, often declaring to herself how fatally she had erred, and as often shaking her head in hopeless renunciation of any present escape from the consequences of that error. She saw her position clearly, yet it seemed that she had so entangled herself in the meshes of a merciless Fate, that the only reparation she could claim, either for herself or her son, would be thrown away by forestalling — after such endless, endless submission and suffering — the Event which should set her free.

Then she recalled and understood, as never before, Gilbert's childhood and boyhood. For his sake she had accepted menial service in families where he was looked upon and treated as an incumbrance. The child, it had been her comfort to think, was too young to know or feel this, — but now, alas! the remembrance of his shyness and sadness told her a different tale. So nine years had passed, and she was then forced to part with her boy. She had bound him to Farmer Fairthorn, whose good heart, and his wife's, she well knew, and now she worked for him, alone, putting by her savings every year, and stinting herself to the utmost that she might be able to start him in life, if he should live to be his own master. Little by little,

the blot upon her seemed to fade out or be forgotten, and she hoped — oh, how she had hoped! — that he might be spared the knowledge of it.

She watched him grow up, a boy of firm will, strong temper, yet great self-control; and the easy Fairthorn rule, which would have spoiled a youth of livelier spirits, was, providentially, the atmosphere in which his nature grew more serene and patient. He was steady, industrious, and faithful, and the Fairthorns loved him almost as their own son. When he reached the age of eighteen, he was allowed many important privileges: he hauled flour to Newport, having a share of the profits, and in other ways earned a sum which, with his mother's aid, enabled him to buy a team of his own, on coming of age.

Two years more of this weary, lonely labor, and the one absorbing aim of Mary Potter's life, which she had impressed upon him ever since he was old enough to understand it, drew near fulfilment. The farm upon which they now lived was sold, and Gilbert became the purchaser. There was still a debt of a thousand dollars upon the property, and she felt that until it was paid, they possessed no secure home. During the year which had elapsed since the purchase, Gilbert, by unwearied labor, had laid up about four hundred dollars, and another year, he had said, if he should prosper in his plans, would see them free at last! Then, — let the world say what it chose! They had fought their way from shame and poverty to honest independence, and the respect which follows success would at least be theirs.

This was always the consoling thought to which Mary Potter returned, from the unallayed trouble of her mind. Day by day, Gilbert's new figure became more familiar, and she was conscious that her own manner towards him must change with it. The subject of his birth, however, and the new difficulties with which it beset her, would not be thrust aside. For years she had almost ceased to think

of the possible release, of which she had spoken : now it returned and filled her with a strange, restless impatience.

Gilbert, also, had ample time to review his own position, during the fortnight's absence. After passing the hills and emerging upon the long, fertile swells of Lancaster, his experienced leaders but rarely needed the guidance of his hand or voice. Often, sunk in revery, the familiar landmarks of the journey went by unheeded ; often he lay awake in the crowded bedroom of a tavern, striving to clear a path for his feet a little way into the future. Only men of the profoundest culture make a deliberate study of their own natures, but those less gifted often act with an equal or even superior wisdom, because their qualities operate spontaneously, unwatched by an introverted eye. Such men may be dimly conscious of certain inconsistencies, or unsolved puzzles, in themselves, but instead of sitting down to unravel them, they seek the easiest way to pass by and leave them untouched. For them the material aspects of life are of the highest importance, and a true instinct shows them that beyond the merest superficial acquaintance with their own natures lie deep and disturbing questions, with which they are not fitted to grapple.

There comes a time, however, to every young man, even the most uncultivated, when he touches one of the primal, eternal forces of life, and is conscious of other needs and another destiny. This time had come to Gilbert Potter, forcing him to look upon the circumstances of his life from a loftier point of view. He had struggled, passionately but at random, for light, — but, fortunately, every earnest struggle is towards the light, and it now began to dawn upon him.

He first became aware of one enigma, the consideration of which was not so easy to lay aside. His mother had not been deceived : there was a change in the man since that evening. Often and often, in gloomy broodings over his supposed disgrace, he had fiercely asserted to himself

that *he* was free from stain, and the unrespect in which he stood was an injustice to be bravely defied. The brand which he wore, and which he fancied was seen by every eye he met, existed in his own fancy; his brow was as pure, his right to esteem and honor equal, to that of any other man. But it was impossible to act upon this reasoning; still when the test came he would shrink and feel the pain, instead of trampling it under his feet.

Now that the brand *was* removed, the strength which he had so desperately craved, was suddenly his. So far as the world was concerned, nothing was altered; no one knew of the revelation which his mother had made to him; he was still the child of her shame, but this knowledge was no longer a torture. Now he had a right to respect, not asserted only to his own heart, but which every man would acknowledge, were it made known. He was no longer a solitary individual, protesting against prejudice and custom. Though still feeling that the protest was just, and that his new courage implied some weakness, he could not conceal from himself the knowledge that this very weakness was the practical fountain of his strength. He was a secret and unknown unit of the great majority.

There was another, more intimate subject which the new knowledge touched very nearly; and here, also, hope dawned upon a sense akin to despair. With all the force of his nature, Gilbert Potter loved Martha Deane. He had known her since he was a boy at Fairthorn's; her face had always been the brightest in his memory; but it was only since the purchase of the farm that his matured manhood had fully recognized its answering womanhood in her. He was slow to acknowledge the truth, even to his own heart, and when it could no longer be denied, he locked it up and sealed it with seven seals, determined never to betray it, to her or any one. Then arose a wild hope, that respect might come with the independence for which he was laboring, and perhaps he might dare to draw

nearer, — near enough to guess if there were any answer in her heart. It was a frail support, but he clung to it as with his life, for there was none other.

Now, — although his uncertainty was as great as ever, — his approach could not humiliate her. His love brought no shadow of shame ; it was proudly white and clean. Ah ! he had forgotten that she did not know, — that his lips were sealed until his mother's should be opened to the world. The curse was not to be shaken off so easily.

By the time he had twice traversed the long, weary road between Columbia and Newport, Gilbert reached a desperate solution of this difficulty. The end of his meditations was : " I will see if there be love in woman as in man ! — love that takes no note of birth or station, but, once having found its mate, is faithful from first to last." In love, an honest and faithful heart touches the loftiest ideal. Gilbert knew that, were the case reversed, no possible test could shake his steadfast affection, and how else could he measure the quality of hers ? He said to himself : " Perhaps it is cruel, but I cannot spare her the trial." He was prouder than he knew, — but we must remember all that he endured.

It was a dry, windy March month, that year, and he made four good trips before the first of April. Returning home from Newport, by way of Wilmington, with seventy-five dollars clear profit in his pocket, his prospects seemed very cheerful. Could he accomplish two more months of hauling during the year, and the crops should be fair, the money from these sources, and the sale of his wagon and one span, would be something more than enough to discharge the remaining debt. He knew, moreover, how the farm could be more advantageously worked, having used his eyes to good purpose in passing through the rich, abundant fields of Lancaster. The land once his own, — which, like his mother, he could not yet feel, — his future, in a material sense, was assured.

Before reaching the Buck Tavern, he overtook a woman plodding slowly along the road. Her rusty beaver hat, tied down over her ears, and her faded gown, were in singular contrast to the shining new scarlet shawl upon her shoulders. As she stopped and turned, at the sound of his tinkling bells, she showed a hard red face, not devoid of a certain coarse beauty, and he recognized Deb. Smith, a lawless, irregular creature, well known about Kennett.

"Good-day, Deborah!" said he; "if you are going my way, I can give you a lift."

"He calls me 'Deborah,'" she muttered to herself; then aloud — "Ay, and thank ye, Mr. Gilbert."

Seizing the tail of the near horse with one hand, she sprang upon the wagon-tongue, and the next moment sat upon the board at his side. Then, rummaging in a deep pocket, she produced, one after the other, a short black pipe, an eel-skin tobacco-pouch, flint, tinder, and a clumsy knife. With a dexterity which could only have come from long habit, she prepared and kindled the weed, and was presently puffing forth rank streams, with an air of the deepest satisfaction.

"Which way?" asked Gilbert.

"Your 'n, as far as you go, — always providin' you takes me."

"Of course, Deborah, you're welcome. I have no load, you see."

"Mighty clever in you, Mr. Gilbert; but you always was one o' the clever ones. Them as thinks themselves better born" —

"Come, Deborah, none of that!" he exclaimed.

"Ax your pardon," she said, and smoked her pipe in silence. When she had finished and knocked the ashes out against the front panel of the wagon, she spoke again, in a hard, bitter voice, —

"'Tis n't much difference what *I* am. I was raised on hard knocks, and now I must git my livin' by 'em. But I

axes no 'un's help, I'm *that* proud, anyways. I go my own road, and a straighter one, too, damme, than I git credit for, but I let other people go their'n. You might have wuss company than me, though *I* say it."

These words hinted at an inward experience in some respects so surprisingly like his own, that Gilbert was startled. He knew the reputation of the woman, though he would have found it difficult to tell whereupon it was based. Everybody said she was bad, and nobody knew particularly why. She lived alone, in a log-cabin in the woods; did washing and house-cleaning; worked in the harvest-fields; smoked, and took her gill of whiskey with the best of them, — but other vices, though inferred, were not proven. Involuntarily, he contrasted her position, in this respect, with his own. The world, he had recently learned, was wrong in his case; might it not also be doing her injustice? Her pride, in its coarse way, was his also, and his life, perhaps, had only unfolded into honorable success through a mother's ever-watchful care and never-wearyed toil.

"Deborah," he said, after a pause, "no man or woman who makes an honest living by hard work, is bad company for me. I am trying to do the same thing that you are, — to be independent of others. It's not an easy thing for anybody, starting from nothing, but I can guess that it must be much harder for you than for me."

"Yes, you're a man!" she cried. "Would to God I'd been one, too! A man can do everything that I do, and it's all right and proper. Why did the Lord give me strength? Look at that!" She bared her right arm — **hard**, knitted muscle from wrist to shoulder — and clenched **her** fist. "What's that for? — not for a woman, I say I could take two of 'em by the necks and pitch 'em over yon fence. I've felled an Irishman like an ox when he called me names. The anger's in me, and the boldness and the roughness, and the cursin'; I did n't put 'em **there**

and I can't git 'em out now, if I tried ever so much. Why did they snatch the sewin' from me when I wanted to learn women's work, and send me out to yoke th' oxen? I do believe I was a gal onc't, a six-month or so, but it's over long ago. I've been a man ever since!"

She took a bottle out of her pocket, and offered it to Gilbert. When he refused, she simply said: "You're right!" set it to her mouth, and drank long and deeply. There was a wild, painful gleam of truth in her words, which touched his sympathy. How should he dare to judge this unfortunate creature, not knowing what perverse freak of nature, and untoward circumstances of life had combined to make her what she was? His manner towards her was kind and serious, and by degrees this covert respect awoke in her a desire to deserve it. She spoke calmly and soberly, exhibiting a wonderful knowledge as they rode onwards, not only of farming, but of animals, trees, and plants.

The team, knowing that home and rest were near, marched cheerily up and down the hills along the border, and before sunset, emerging from the woods, they overlooked the little valley, the mill, and the nestling farmhouse. An Indian war-whoop rang across the meadow, and Gilbert recognized Sam's welcome therein.

"Now, Deborah," said he, "you shall stop and have some supper, before you go any farther."

"I'm obliged, all the same," said she, "but I must push on. I've to go beyond the Square, and could n't wait. But tell your mother if she wants a man's arm in house-cleanin' time to let me know. And, Mr. Gilbert, let me say one thing: give me your hand."

The horses had stopped to drink at the creek. He gave her his right hand.

She held it in hers a moment, gazing intently on the palm. Then she bent her head and blew upon it gently, three times.

"Never mind: it's my fancy," she said. "You're born for trial and good-luck, but the trials come first, all of a heap, and the good luck afterwards. You've got a friend in Deb. Smith, if you ever need one. Good-bye to ye!"

With these words she sprang from the wagon, and trudged off silently up the hill. The horses turned of themselves into the lane leading to the barn, and Gilbert assisted Sam in unharnessing and feeding them before entering the house. By the time he was ready to greet his mother, and enjoy, without further care, his first evening at home, he knew everything that had occurred on the farm during his absence.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD KENNETT MEETING.

ON the Sunday succeeding his return, Gilbert Potter proposed to his mother that they should attend the Friends' Meeting at Old Kennett.

The Quaker element, we have already stated, largely predominated in this part of the county; and even the many families who were not actually members of the sect were strongly colored with its peculiar characteristics. Though not generally using "the plain speech" among themselves, they invariably did so towards Quakers, varied but little from the latter in dress and habits, and, with very few exceptions, regularly attended their worship. In fact, no other religious attendance was possible, without a Sabbath journey too long for the well-used farm-horses. To this class belonged Gilbert and his mother, the Fairthorns, and even the Bartons. Farmer Fairthorn had a birth-right, it is true, until his marriage, which having been a stolen match, and not performed according to "Friends' ceremony," occasioned his excommunication. He might have been restored to the rights of membership by admitting his sorrow for the offence, but this he stoutly refused to do. The predicament was not an unusual one in the neighborhood; but a few, among whom was Dr. Deane, Martha's father, submitted to the required humiliation. As this did not take place, however, until after her birth, Martha was still without the pale, and preferred to remain so, for two reasons: first, that a scoop bonnet was monstrous in a young woman's head; and second, that she was pas-

sionately fond of music, and saw no harm in a dance. This determination of hers was, as her father expressed himself, a "great cross" to him; but she had a habit of paralyzing his argument by turning against him the testimony of the Friends in regard to forms and ceremonies, and their reliance on the guidance of the Spirit.

Herein Martha was strictly logical, and though she, and others who belonged to the same class, were sometimes characterized, by a zealous Quaker, in moments of bitterness, as being "the world's people," they were generally regarded, not only with tolerance, but in a spirit of fraternity. The high seats in the gallery were not for them, but they were free to any other part of the meeting-house during life, and to a grave in the grassy and briery enclosure adjoining, when dead. The necessity of belonging to some organized church was recognized but faintly, if at all; provided their lives were honorable, they were considered very fair Christians.

Mary Potter but rarely attended meeting, not from any lack of the need of worship, but because she shrank with painful timidity from appearing in the presence of the assembled neighborhood. She was, nevertheless, grateful for Gilbert's success, and her heart inclined to thanksgiving; besides, he desired that they should go, and she was not able to offer any valid objection. So, after breakfast, the two best horses of the team were very carefully groomed, saddled, and — Sam having been sent off on a visit to his father, with the house-key in his pocket — the mother and son took the road up the creek.

Both were plainly, yet very respectably, dressed, in garments of the same home-made cloth, of a deep, dark brown color, but Mary Potter wore under her cloak the new crape shawl which Gilbert had brought to her from Wilmington, and his shirt of fine linen displayed a modest ruffle in front. The resemblance in their faces was even more strongly marked, in the common expression of calm, grave repose

which sprang from the nature of their journey. A stranger meeting them that morning, would have seen that they were persons of unusual force of character, and bound to each other by an unusual tie.

Up the lovely valley, or rather glen, watered by the eastern branch of Redley Creek, they rode to the main highway. It was an early spring, and the low-lying fields were already green with the young grass; the weeping-willows in front of the farm-houses seemed to spout up and fall like broad enormous geysers as the wind swayed them, and daffodils bloomed in all the warmer gardens. The dark foliage of the cedars skirting the road counteracted that indefinable gloom which the landscapes of early spring, in their grayness and incompleteness, so often inspire, and mocked the ripened summer in the close shadows which they threw. It was a pleasant ride, especially after mother and son had reached the main road, and other horsemen and horsewomen issued from the gates of farms on either side, taking their way to the meeting-house. Only two or three families could boast vehicles, — heavy, cumbrous “chairs,” as they were called, with a convex canopy resting on four stout pillars, and the bulging body swinging from side to side on huge springs of wood and leather. No healthy man or woman, however, unless he or she were very old, travelled otherwise than on horseback.

Now and then exchanging grave but kindly nods with their acquaintances, they rode slowly along the level upland, past the Anvil Tavern, through Logtown, — a cluster of primitive cabins at the junction of the Wilmington Road, — and reached the meeting-house in good season. Gilbert assisted his mother to alight at the stone platform built for that purpose near the women’s end of the building, and then fastened the horses in the long, open shed in the rear. Then, as was the custom, he entered by the men’s door, and quietly took a seat in the silent assembly.

The stiff, unpainted benches were filled with the congre-

gation, young and old, wearing their hats, and with a stolid, drowsy look upon their faces. Over a high wooden partition the old women in the gallery, but not the young women on the floor of the house, could be seen. Two stoves, with interminable lengths of pipe, suspended by wires from the ceiling, created a stifling temperature. Every slight sound or motion, — the moving of a foot, the drawing forth of a pocket-handkerchief, the lifting or lowering of a head, — seemed to disturb the quiet as with a shock, and drew many of the younger eyes upon it; while in front, like the guardian statues of an Egyptian temple, sat the older members, with their hands upon their knees or clasped across their laps. Their faces were grave and severe.

After nearly an hour of this suspended animation, an old Friend rose, removed his broad-brimmed hat, and placing his hands upon the rail before him, began slowly swaying to and fro, while he spoke. As he rose into the chant peculiar to the sect, intoning alike his quotations from the Psalms and his utterances of plain, practical advice, an expression of quiet but almost luxurious satisfaction stole over the faces of his aged brethren. With half-closed eyes and motionless bodies, they drank in the sound like a rich draught, with a sense of exquisite refreshment. A close connection of ideas, a logical derivation of argument from text, would have aroused their suspicions that the speaker depended rather upon his own active, conscious intellect, than upon the moving of the Spirit; but this aimless wandering of a half-awake soul through the cadences of a language which was neither song nor speech, was, to their minds, the evidence of genuine inspiration.

When the old man sat down, a woman arose and chanted forth the suggestions which had come to her in the silence, in a voice of wonderful sweetness and strength. Here Music seemed to revenge herself for the slight done to her by the sect. The ears of the hearers were so charmed by the purity of tone, and the delicate, rhythmical cadences

of the sentences, that much of the wise lessons repeated from week to week failed to reach their consciousness.

After another interval of silence, the two oldest men reached their hands to each other, — a sign which the younger members had anxiously awaited. The spell snapped in an instant; all arose and moved into the open air, where all things at first appeared to wear the same aspect of solemnity. The poplar-trees, the stone wall, the bushes in the corners of the fence, looked grave and respectful for a few minutes. Neighbors said, "How does thee do?" to each other, in subdued voices, and there was a conscientious shaking of hands all around before they dared to indulge in much conversation.

Gradually, however, all returned to the out-door world and its interests. The fences became so many posts and rails once more, the bushes so many elders and blackberries to be cut away, and the half-green fields so much sod for corn-ground. Opinions in regard to the weather and the progress of spring labor were freely interchanged, and the few unimportant items of social news, which had collected in seven days, were gravely distributed. This was at the men's end of the meeting-house; on their side, the women were similarly occupied, but we can only conjecture the subjects of their conversation. The young men — as is generally the case in religious sects of a rigid and clannish character — were by no means handsome. Their faces all bore the stamp of *repression*, in some form or other, and as they talked their eyes wandered with an expression of melancholy longing and timidity towards the sweet, maidenly faces, whose bloom, and pure, gentle beauty not even their hideous bonnets could obscure.

One by one the elder men came up to the stone platform with the stable old horses which their wives were to ride home; the huge chair, in which sat a privileged couple, creaked and swayed from side to side, as it rolled with ponderous dignity from the yard; and now, while the girls

were waiting their turn, the grave young men plucked up courage, wandered nearer, greeted, exchanged words, and so were helped into an atmosphere of youth.

Gilbert, approaching with them, was first recognized by his old friend, Sally Fairthorn, whose voice of salutation was so loud and cheery, as to cause two or three sedate old "women-friends" to turn their heads in grave astonishment. Mother Fairthorn, with her bright, round face, followed, and then — serene and strong in her gentle, symmetrical loveliness — Martha Deane. Gilbert's hand throbbed, as he held hers a moment, gazing into the sweet blue of her eyes; yet, passionately as he felt that he loved her in that moment, perfect as was the delight of her presence, a better joy came to his heart when she turned away to speak with his mother. Mark Deane — a young giant with curly yellow locks, and a broad, laughing mouth — had just placed a hand upon his shoulder, and he could not watch the bearing of the two women to each other; but all his soul listened to their voices, and he heard in Martha Deane's the kindly courtesy and respect which he did not see.

Mother Fairthorn and Sally so cordially insisted that Mary Potter and her son should ride home with them to dinner, that no denial was possible. When the horses were brought up to the block the yard was nearly empty, and the returning procession was already winding up the hill towards Logtown.

"Come, Mary," said Mother Fairthorn, "you and I will ride together, and you shall tell me all about your ducks and turkeys. The young folks can get along without us, I guess."

Martha Deane had ridden to meeting in company with her cousin Mark and Sally, but the order of the homeward ride was fated to be different. Joe and Jake, bestriding a single horse, like two of the Haymon's-children, were growing impatient, so they took the responsibility of dash-

ing up to Mark and Sally, who were waiting in the road, and announcing, —

“Cousin Martha says we’re to go on; she’ll ride with Gilbert.”

Both well knew the pranks of the boys, but perhaps they found the message well-invented if not true; for they obeyed with secret alacrity, although Sally made a becoming show of reluctance. Before they reached the bottom of the hollow, Joe and Jake, seeing two school-mates in advance, similarly mounted, dashed off in a canter, to overtake them, and the two were left alone.

Gilbert and Martha naturally followed, since not more than two could conveniently ride abreast. But their movements were so quiet and deliberate, and the accident which threw them together was accepted so simply and calmly that no one could guess what warmth of longing, of reverential tenderness, beat in every muffled throb of one of the two hearts.

Martha was an admirable horsewoman, and her slender, pliant figure never showed to greater advantage than in the saddle. Her broad beaver hat was tied down over the ears, throwing a cool gray shadow across her clear, joyous eyes and fresh cheeks. A pleasanter face never touched a young man’s fancy, and every time it turned towards Gilbert it brightened away the distress of love. He caught, unconsciously, the serenity of her mood, and foretasted the peace which her being would bring to him if it were ever intrusted to his hands.

“Did you do well by your hauling, Gilbert,” she asked, “and are you now home for the summer?”

“Until after corn-planting,” he answered. “Then I must take two or three weeks, as the season turns out. I am not able to give up my team yet.”

“But you soon will be, I hope. It must be very lonely for your mother to be on the farm without you.”

These words touched him gratefully, and led him to a

candid openness of speech which he would not otherwise have ventured, — not from any inherent lack of candor but from a reluctance to speak of himself.

"That's it, Martha," he said. "It is her work that I have the farm at all, and I only go away the oftener now, that I may the sooner stay with her altogether. The thought of her makes each trip lonelier than the last."

"I like to hear you say that, Gilbert. And it must be a comfort to you, withal, to know that you are working as much for your mother's sake as your own. I think I should feel so, at least, in your place. I feel my own mother's loss more now than when she died, for I was then so young that I can only just remember her face."

"But you have a father!" he exclaimed, and the words were scarcely out of his mouth before he became aware of their significance, uttered by his lips. He had not meant so much, — only that she, like him, still enjoyed one parent's care. The blood came into his face; she saw and understood the sign, and broke a silence which would soon have become painful.

"Yes," she said, "and I am very grateful that he is spared; but we seem to belong most to our mothers."

"That is the truth," he said firmly, lifting his head with the impulse of his recovered pride, and meeting her eyes without flinching. "I belong altogether to mine. She has made me a man and set me upon my feet. From this time forward, my place is to stand between her and the world!"

Martha Deane's blood throbbed an answer to this assertion of himself. A sympathetic pride beamed in her eyes; she slightly bent her head, in answer, without speaking, and Gilbert felt that he was understood and valued. He had drawn a step nearer to the trial which he had resolved to make, and would now venture no further.

There was a glimmering spark of courage in his heart. He was surprised, in recalling the conversation afterwards, to find how much of his plans he had communicated to her

during the ride, encouraged by the kindly interest she manifested, and the sensible comments she uttered. Joe and Jake, losing their mates at a cross-road, and finding Sally and Mark Deane not very lively company for them, rode back and disturbed these confidences, but not until they had drawn the two into a relation of acknowledged mutual interest.

Martha Deane had always, as she confessed to Sally, *liked* Gilbert Potter; she liked every young man of character and energy; but now she began to suspect that there was a rarer worth in his nature than she had guessed. From that day he was more frequently the guest of her thoughts than ever before. Instinct, in him, had performed the same service which men of greater experience of the world would have reached through keen perception and careful tact, — in confiding to her his position, his labors and hopes, material as was the theme and seemingly unsuited to the occasion, he had in reality appreciated the serious, reflective nature underlying her girlish grace and gayety. What other young man of her acquaintance, she asked herself, would have done the same thing?

When they reached Kennett Square, Mother Fairthorn urged Martha to accompany them, and Sally impetuously seconded the invitation. Dr. Deane's horse was at his door, however, and his daughter, with her eyes on Gilbert, as if saying "for my father's sake," steadfastly declined. Mark, however, took her place, but there never had been, or could be, too many guests at the Fairthorn table.

When they reached the garden-wall, Sally sprang from her horse with such haste that her skirt caught on the pommel and left her hanging, being made of stuff too stout to tear. It was well that Gilbert was near, on the same side, and disengaged her in an instant; but her troubles did not end here. As she bustled in and out of the kitchen, preparing the dinner-table in the long sitting-room, the hooks and door-handles seemed to have an unaccountable

habit of thrusting themselves in her way, and she was ready to cry at each glance of Mark's laughing eyes. She had never heard the German proverb, "who loves, teases," and was too inexperienced, as yet, to have discovered the fact for herself.

Presently they all sat down to dinner, and after the first solemn quiet, — no one venturing to eat or speak until the plates of all had been heaped with a little of everything upon the table, — the meal became very genial and pleasant. A huge brown pitcher of stinging cider added its mild stimulus to the calm country blood, and under its mellowing influence Mark announced the most important fact of his life, — he was to have the building of Hallowell's barn.

As Gilbert and his mother rode homewards, that afternoon, neither spoke much, but both felt, in some indefinite way, better prepared for the life that lay before them.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT DR. DEANE'S.

As she dismounted on the large flat stone outside the paling, Martha Deane saw her father's face at the window. It was sterner and graver than usual.

The Deane mansion stood opposite the Unicorn Tavern. When built, ninety years previous, it had been considered a triumph of architecture ; the material was squared logs from the forest, dovetailed, and overlapping at the corners, which had the effect of rustic quoins, as contrasted with the front, which was plastered and yellow-washed. A small portico, covered with a tangled mass of eglantine and coral honeysuckle, with a bench at each end, led to the door ; and the ten feet of space between it and the front paling were devoted to flowers and rose-bushes. At each corner of the front rose an old, picturesque, straggling cedar-tree.

There were two front doors, side by side, — one for the family sitting-room, the other (rarely opened, except when guests arrived) for the parlor. Martha Deane entered the former, and we will enter with her.

The room was nearly square, and lighted by two windows. On those sides the logs were roughly plastered ; on the others there were partitions of panelled oak, nearly black with age and smoke, as were the heavy beams of the same wood which formed the ceiling. In the corner of the room next the kitchen there was an open Franklin stove, — an innovation at that time, — upon which two or three hickory sticks were smouldering into snowy ashes.

The floor was covered with a country-made rag carpet, in which an occasional strip of red or blue listing brightened the prevailing walnut color of the woof. The furniture was simple and massive, its only unusual feature being a tall cabinet with shelves filled with glass jars, and an infinity of small drawers. A few bulky volumes on the lower shelf constituted the medical library of Dr. Deane.

This gentleman was still standing at the window, with his hands clasped across his back. His Quaker suit was of the finest drab broadcloth, and the plain cravat visible above his high, straight waistcoat, was of spotless cambric. His knee- and shoe-buckles were of the simplest pattern, but of good, solid silver, and there was not a wrinkle in the stockings of softest lamb's-wool, which covered his massive calves. There was always a faint odor of lavender, bergamot, or sweet marjoram about him, and it was a common remark in the neighborhood that the sight and smell of the Doctor helped a weak patient almost as much as his medicines.

In his face there was a curious general resemblance to his daughter, though the detached features were very differently formed. Large, unsymmetrical, and somewhat coarse, — even for a man, — they derived much of their effect from his scrupulous attire and studied air of wisdom. His long gray hair was combed back, that no portion of the moderate frontal brain might be covered; the eyes were gray rather than blue, and a habit of concealment had marked its lines in the corners, unlike the open, perfect frankness of his daughter's. The principal resemblance was in the firm, clear outline of the upper lip, which alone, in his face, had it been supported by the under one, would have made him almost handsome; but the latter was large and slightly hanging. There were marked inconsistencies in his face, but this was no disadvantage in a community unaccustomed to studying the external marks of character.

"Just home, father? How did thee leave Dinah Passmore?" asked Martha, as she untied the strings of her beaver.

"Better," he answered, turning from the window; "but, Martha, who did I see thee riding with?"

"Does thee mean Gilbert Potter?"

"I do," he said, and paused. Martha, with her cloak over her arm and bonnet in her hand, in act to leave the room, waited, saying, —

"Well, father?"

So frank and serene was her bearing, that the old man felt both relieved and softened.

"I suppose it happened so," he said. "I saw his mother with Friend Fairthorn. I only meant thee should n't be seen in company with young Potter, when thee could help it; thee knows what I mean."

"I don't think, father," she slowly answered, "there is anything against Gilbert Potter's life or character, except that which is no just reproach to *him*."

"'The sins of the parents shall be visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation.' That is enough, Martha."

She went up to her room, meditating, with an earnestness almost equal to Gilbert's, upon this form of the world's injustice, which he was powerless to overcome. Her father shared it, and the fact did not surprise her; but her independent spirit had already ceased to be guided, in all things, by his views. She felt that the young man deserved the respect and admiration which he had inspired in her mind, and until a better reason could be discovered, she would continue so to regard him. The decision was reached rapidly, and then laid aside for any future necessity; she went down-stairs again in her usual quiet, cheerful mood.

During her absence another conversation had taken place.

Miss Betsy Lavender (who was a fast friend of Martha, and generally spent her Sundays at the Doctor's,) was sitting before the stove, drying her feet. She was silent until Martha left the room, when she suddenly exclaimed :

"Doctor ! Judge not that ye be not judged."

"Thee may think as thee pleases, Betsy," said he, rather sharply : "it's thy nature, I believe, to take everybody's part."

"Put yourself in his place," she continued, — "remember them that's in bonds as bound with 'em, — I disremember exackly how it goes, but no matter : I say your way a'n't right, and I'd say it seven times, if need be ! There's no steadier nor better-doin' young fellow in these parts than Gilbert Potter. Ferris, down in Pennsbury, or Alf Barton, here, for that matter, a'n't to be put within a mile of him. I could say something in Mary Potter's behalf, too, but I won't : for there's Scribes and Pharisees about."

Dr. Deane did not notice this thrust : it was not his habit to get angry. "Put *thyself* in *my* place, Betsy," he said. "He's a wortny young man, in some respects, I grant thee, but would thee like *thy* daughter to be seen riding home beside him from Meeting ? It's one thing speaking for *thyself*, and another for *thy* daughter."

"Thy daughter !" she repeated. "Old or young can't make any difference, as I see."

There was something else on her tongue, but she forcibly withheld the words. She would not exhaust her ammunition until there was both a chance and a necessity to do some execution. The next moment Martha reëntered the room.

After dinner, they formed a quiet group in the front sitting-room. Dr. Deane, having no more visits to make that day, took a pipe of choice tobacco, — the present of a Virginia Friend, whose acquaintance he had made at Yearly Meeting, — and seated himself in the arm-chair beside the stove. Martha, at the west window, enjoyed a volume of

Hannah More, and Miss Betsy, at the front window, labored over the Psalms. The sun shone with dim, muffled orb, but the air without was mild, and there were already brown tufts, which would soon be blossoms, on the lilac twigs.

Suddenly Miss Betsy lifted up her head and exclaimed, "Well, I never!" As she did so, there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said Dr. Deane, and in came Mr. Alfred Barton, resplendent in blue coat, buff waistcoat, cambric ruffles, and silver-gilt buckles. But, alas! the bunch of seals — topaz, agate, and cornelian — no longer buoyed the deep-anchored watch. The money due his father had been promptly paid, through the agency of a three-months' promissory note, and thus the most momentous result of the robbery was overcome. This security for the future, however, scarcely consoled him for the painful privation of the present. Without the watch, Alfred Barton felt that much of his dignity and importance was lacking.

Dr. Deane greeted his visitor with respect, Martha with the courtesy due to a guest, and Miss Betsy with the off-hand, independent manner, under which she masked her private opinions of the persons whom she met.

"Mark is n't at home, I see," said Mr. Barton, after having taken his seat in the centre of the room: "I thought I'd have a little talk with him about the wagon-house. I suppose he told you that I got Hallowell's new barn for him?"

"Yes, and we're all greatly obliged to thee, as well as Mark," said the Doctor. "The two jobs make a fine start for a young mechanic, and I hope he'll do as well as he's been done by: there's luck in a good beginning. By the bye, has thee heard anything more of Sandy Flash's doings?"

Mr. Barton fairly started at this question. His own misfortune had been carefully kept secret, and he could not

suspect that the Doctor knew it ; but he nervously dreaded the sound of the terrible name.

“What is it ?” he asked, in a faint voice.

“He has turned up in Bradford, this time, and they say has robbed Jesse Frame, the Collector, of between four and five hundred dollars. The Sheriff and a posse of men from the Valley hunted him for several days, but found no signs. Some think he has gone up into the Welch Mountain ; but for my part, I should not be surprised if he were in this neighborhood.”

“Good heavens !” exclaimed Mr. Barton, starting from his chair.

“Now ’s your chance,” said Miss Betsy. “Git the young men together who won’t feel afraid o’ bein’ twenty ag’in one : you know the holes and corners where he ’ll be likely to hide, and what ’s to hinder you from ketchin’ him ?”

“But he must have many secret friends,” said Martha, “if what I have heard is true, — that he has often helped a poor man with the money which he takes only from the rich. You know he still calls himself a Tory, and many of those whose estates have been confiscated, would not scruple to harbor him, or even take his money.”

“Take his money. That ’s a fact,” remarked Miss Betsy, “and now I dunno whether I want him ketched. There ’s worse men goin’ round, as respectable as you please, stealin’ all their born days, only cunnin’ly jukin’ round the law instead o’ buttin’ square through it. Why, old Liz Williams, o’ Birmingham, herself told me with her own mouth, how she was ridin’ home from Phildelphy market last winter, with six dollars, the price of her turkeys — and General Washin’ton’s cook took one of ’em, but that ’s neither here nor there — in her pocket, and fearful as death when she come to Concord woods, and lo and behold ! there she was overtook by a fresh-complected man, and she begged him to ride with her, for she had six dollars in her pocket and Sandy was known to be about. So

he rode with her to her very lane-end, as kind and civil a person as she ever see, and then and there he said, 'Don't be afeard, Madam, for I, which have seen you home, is Sandy Flash himself, and here 's somethin' more to remember me by,' — no sooner said than done, he put a goold guinea into her hand, and left her there as petrified as Lot's wife. Now *I* say, and it may be violation of the law, for all I know, but never mind, that Sandy Flash has got one corner of his heart in the right place, no matter where the others is. There 's honor even among thieves, they say."

"Seriously, Alfred," said Dr. Deane, cutting Miss Betsy short before she had half expressed her sentiments, "it is time that something was done. If Flash is not caught soon, we shall be overrun with thieves, and there will be no security anywhere on the high roads, or in our houses. I wish that men of influence in the neighborhood, like thyself, would come together and plan, at least, to keep Kennett clear of him. Then other townships may do the same, and so the thing be stopped. If I were younger, and my practice were not so laborious, I would move in the matter, but thee is altogether a more suitable person."

"Do you think so?" Barton replied, with an irrepressible reluctance, around which he strove to throw an air of modesty. "That would be the proper way, certainly, but I, — I don't know, — that is, I can't flatter myself that I'm the best man to undertake it."

"It requires some courage, you know," Martha remarked, and her glance made him feel very uncomfortable, "and you are too dashing a fox-hunter not to have that. Perhaps the stranger who rode with you to Avondale — what was his name? — might be of service. If I were in your place, I should be glad of a chance to incur danger for the good of the neighborhood."

Mr. Alfred Barton was on nettles. If there were irony

in her words his intellect was too muddy to detect it : her assumption of his courage could only be accepted as a compliment, but it was the last compliment he desired to have paid to himself, just at that time.

"Yes," he said, with a forced laugh, rushing desperately into the opposite extreme, "but the danger and the courage are not worth talking about. Any man ought to be able to face a robber, single-handed, and as for twenty men, why when it's once known, Sandy Flash will only be too glad to keep away."

"Then, do thee do what I've recommended. It may be, as thee says, that the being prepared is all that is necessary," remarked Dr. Deane.

Thus caught, Mr. Barton could do no less than acquiesce, and very much to his secret dissatisfaction, the Doctor proceeded to name the young men of the neighborhood, promising to summon such as lived on the lines of his professional journeys, that they might confer with the leader of the undertaking. Martha seconded the plan with an evident interest, yet it did not escape her that neither her father nor Mr. Barton had mentioned the name of Gilbert Potter.

"Is that all?" she asked, when a list of some eighteen persons had been suggested. Involuntarily, she looked at Miss Betsy Lavender.

"No, indeed!" cried the latter. "There's Jabez Travilla, up on the ridge, and Gilbert Potter, down at the mill."

"H'm, yes; what does thee say, Alfred?" asked the Doctor.

"They're both good riders, and I think they have courage enough, but we can never tell what a man is until he's been tried. They would increase the number, and that, it seems to me, is a consideration."

"Perhaps thee had better exercise thy own judgment there," the Doctor observed, and the subject, having been

as fully discussed as was possible without consultation with other persons, it was dropped, greatly to Barton's relief.

But in endeavoring to converse with Martha he only exchanged one difficulty for another. His vanity, powerful as it was, gave way before that instinct which is the curse and torment of vulgar natures, — which leaps into life at every contact of refinement, showing them the gulf between, which they know not how to cross. The impudence, the aggressive rudeness which such natures often exhibit, is either a mask to conceal their deficiency, or an angry protest against it. Where there is a drop of gentleness in the blood, it appreciates and imitates the higher nature.

This was the feeling which made Alfred Barton uncomfortable in the presence of Martha Deane, — which told him, in advance, that natures so widely sundered, never could come into near relations with each other, and thus quite neutralized the attraction of her beauty and her ten thousand dollars. His game, however, was to pay court to her, and in so pointed a way that it should be remarked and talked about in the neighborhood. Let it once come through others to the old man's ears, he would have proved his obedience and could not be reproached if the result were fruitless.

"What are you reading, Miss Martha?" he asked, after a long and somewhat awkward pause.

She handed him the book in reply.

"Ah! Hannah More, — a friend of yours? Is she one of the West-Whiteland Moores?"

Martha could not suppress a light, amused laugh, as she answered: "Oh, no, she is an English woman."

"Then it's a Tory book," said he, handing it back; "I would n't read it, if I was you."

"It is a story, and I should think you might."

He heard other words than those she spoke. "As Tory as — what?" he asked himself. "As I am," of

course : that is what she means. "Old-man Barton" had been one of the disloyal purveyors for the British army during its occupancy of Philadelphia in the winter of 1777-8, and though the main facts of the traffic wherefrom he had drawn immense profits, never could be proved against him, the general belief hung over the family, and made a very disagreeable cloud. Whenever Alfred Barton quarrelled with any one, the taunt was sure to be flung into his teeth. That it came now, as he imagined, was as great a shock as if Martha had slapped him in the face with her own delicate hand, and his visage reddened from the blow.

Miss Betsy Lavender, bending laboriously over the Psalms, nevertheless kept her dull gray eyes in movement. She saw the misconception, and fearing that Martha did not, made haste to remark : —

"Well, Mr. Alfred, and do *you* think it's a harm to read a story? Why, Miss Ann herself lent me 'Alonzo and Melissa,' and 'Midnight Horrors,' and I'll be bound you've read 'em yourself on the sly. 'T a'n't much other readin' men does, save and except the weekly paper, and law enough to git a tight hold on their debtors. Come, now, let's know what you *do* read?"

"Not much of anything, that's a fact," he answered, recovering himself, with a shudder at the fearful mistake he had been on the point of making, "but I've nothing against women reading stories. I was rather thinking of myself when I spoke to you, Miss Martha."

"So I supposed," she quietly answered. It was provoking. Everything she said made him think there was another meaning behind the words; her composed manner, though he knew it to be habitual, more and more disconcerted him. Never did an intentional wooer find his wooing so painful and laborious. After this attempt he addressed himself to Doctor Deane, for even the question of circumventing Sandy Flash now presented itself to his mind as a relief.

There he sat, and the conversation progressed in jerks and spirts, between pauses of embarrassing silence. The sun hung on the western hill in a web of clouds; Martha and Miss Betsy rose and prepared the tea-table, and the guest, invited perforce, perforce accepted. Soon after the meal was over, however, he murmured something about cattle, took his hat and left.

Two or three horses were hitched before the Unicorn, and he saw some figures through the bar-room window. A bright thought struck him; he crossed the road and entered.

"Hallo, Alf! Where from now? Why, you're as fine as a fiddler!" cried Mr. Joel Ferris, who was fast becoming familiar, on the strength of his inheritance.

"Over the way," answered the landlord, with a wink and a jerk of his thumb.

Mr. Ferris whistled, and one of the others suggested: "He must stand a treat, on that."

"But, I say!" said the former, "how is it you're coming away so soon in the evening?"

"I went very early in the afternoon," Barton answered, with a mysterious, meaning smile, as much as to say: "It's all right; I know what I'm about." Then he added aloud,—"Step up, fellows; what'll you have?"

Many were the jests and questions to which he was forced to submit, but he knew the value of silence in creating an impression, and allowed them to enjoy their own inferences.

It is much easier to start a report, than to counteract it, when once started; but the first, only, was his business.

It was late in the evening when he returned home, and the household were in bed. Nevertheless, he did not enter by the back way, in his stockings, but called Giles down from the garret to unlock the front-door, and made as much noise as he pleased on his way to bed.

The old man heard it, and chuckled under his coverlet.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RAISING.

STEADILY and serenely the Spring advanced. Old people shook their heads and said: "It will be April, this year, that comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion," — but it was not so. Soft, warm showers and frostless nights repaid the trustfulness of the early-expanding buds, and May came clothed completely in pale green, with a wreath of lilac and hawthorn bloom on her brow. For twenty years no such perfect spring had been known; and for twenty years afterwards the farmers looked back to it as a standard of excellence, whereby to measure the forwardness of their crops.

By the twentieth of April the young white-oak leaves were the size of a squirrel's ear, — the old Indian sign of the proper time for corn-planting, which was still accepted by the new race, and the first of May saw many fields already specked with the green points of the springing blades. A warm, silvery vapor hung over the land, mellowing the brief vistas of the interlacing valleys, touching with a sweeter pastoral beauty the irregular alternation of field and forest, and lifting the wooded slopes, far and near, to a statelier and more imposing height. The park-like region of Kennett, settled originally by emigrants from Bucks and Warwickshire, reproduced to their eyes — as it does to this day — the characteristics of their original home, and they transplanted the local names to which they were accustomed, and preserved, even long after the War of Independence, the habits of their rural ancestry. The

massive stone farm-houses, the walled gardens, the bountiful orchards, and, more than all, the well-trimmed hedges of hawthorn and blackthorn dividing their fields, or bordering their roads with the living wall, over which the clematis and wild-ivy love to clamber, made the region beautiful to their eyes. Although the large original grants, mostly given by the hand of William Penn, had been divided and subdivided by three or four prolific generations, there was still enough and to spare, — and even the golden promise held out by “the Backwoods,” as the new States of Ohio and Kentucky were then called, tempted very few to leave their homes.

The people, therefore, loved the soil and clung to it with a fidelity very rare in any part of our restless nation. And, truly, no one who had lived through the mild splendor of that spring, seeing, day by day, the visible deepening of the soft woodland tints, hearing the cheerful sounds of labor, far and wide, in the vapory air, and feeling at once the repose and the beauty of such a quiet, pastoral life, could have turned his back upon it, to battle with the inhospitable wilderness of the West. Gilbert Potter had had ideas of a new home, to be created by himself, and a life to which none should deny honor and respect: but now he gave them up forever. There was a battle to be fought — better here than elsewhere — here, where every scene was dear and familiar, and every object that met his eye gave a mute, gentle sense of consolation.

Restless, yet cheery labor was now the order of life on the farm. From dawn till dusk, Gilbert and Sam were stirring in field, meadow, and garden, keeping pace with the season and forecasting what was yet to come. Sam, although only fifteen, had a manly pride in being equal to the duty imposed upon him by his master's absence, and when the time came to harness the wagon-team once more, the mother and son walked over the fields together and rejoiced in the order and promise of the farm. The influ-

ences of the season had unconsciously touched them both: everything conspired to favor the fulfilment of their common plan, and, as one went forward to the repetition of his tedious journeys back and forth between Columbia and Newport, and the other to her lonely labor in the deserted farm-house, the arches of bells over the collars of the leaders chimed at once to the ears of both, an anthem of thanksgiving and a melody of hope.

So May and the beginning of June passed away, and no important event came to any character of this history. When Gilbert had delivered the last barrels at Newport, and slowly cheered homewards his weary team, he was nearly two hundred dollars richer than when he started, and — if we must confess a universal if somewhat humiliating truth — so much the more a man in courage and determination.

The country was now covered with the first fresh magnificence of summer. The snowy pyramids of dog-wood bloom had faded, but the tulip trees were tall cones of rustling green, lighted with millions of orange-colored stars, and all the underwood beneath the hemlock-forests by the courses of streams, was rosy with laurels and azaleas. The vernal-grass in the meadows was sweeter than any garden-rose, and its breath met that of the wild-grape in the thickets and struggled for preëminence of sweetness. A lush, tropical splendor of vegetation, such as England never knew, heaped the woods and hung the road-side with sprays which grew and bloomed and waned, as if growth were a conscious joy, rather than blind obedience to a law.

When Gilbert reached home, released from his labors abroad until October, he found his fields awaiting their owner's hand. His wheat hung already heavy-headed, though green, and the grass stood so thick and strong that it suggested the ripping music of the scythe-blade which should lay it low. Sam had taken good care of the corn

field, garden, and the cattle, and Gilbert's few words of quiet commendation were a rich reward for all his anxiety. His ambition was, to be counted "a full hand," — this was the *toga virilis*, which, once entitled to wear, would make him feel that he was any man's equal.

Without a day's rest, the labor commenced again, and the passion of Gilbert's heart, though it had only strengthened during his absence, must be thrust aside until the fortune of his harvest was secured.

In the midst of the haying, however, came a message which he could not disregard, — a hasty summons from Mark Deane, who, seeing Gilbert in the upper hill-field, called from the road, bidding him to the raising of Hallowell's new barn, which was to take place on the following Saturday. "Be sure and come!" were Mark's closing words — "there 's to be both dinner and supper, and the girls are to be on hand!"

It was the custom to prepare the complete frame of a barn — sills, plates, girders, posts, and stays — with all their mortices and pins, ready for erection, and then to summon all the able-bodied men of the neighborhood to assist in getting the timbers into place. This service, of course, was given gratuitously, and the farmer who received it could do no less than entertain, after the bountiful manner of the country, his helping neighbors, who therefore, although the occasion implied a certain amount of hard work, were accustomed to regard it as a sort of holiday, or merry-making. Their opportunities for recreation, indeed, were so scanty, that a barn-raising, or a husking-party by moonlight, was a thing to be welcomed.

Hallowell's farm was just half-way between Gilbert's and Kennett Square, and the site of the barn had been well-chosen on a ridge, across the road, which ran between it and the farm-house. The Hallowells were what was called "good providers," and as they belonged to the class of outside Quakers, which we have already described, the chances

were that both music and dance would reward the labor of the day.

Gilbert, of course, could not refuse the invitation of so near a neighbor, and there was a hope in his heart which made it welcome. When the day came he was early on hand, heartily greeted by Mark, who exclaimed, — "Give me a dozen more such shoulders and arms as yours, and I'll make the timbers spin!"

It was a bright, breezy day, making the wheat roll and the leaves twinkle. Ranges of cumuli moved, one after the other, like heaps of silvery wool, across the keen, dark blue of the sky. "A wonderful hay-day," the old farmers remarked, with a half-stifled sense of regret; but the younger men had already stripped themselves to their shirts and knee-breeches, and set to work with a hearty good-will. Mark, as friend, half-host and commander, bore his triple responsibility with a mixture of dash and decision, which became his large frame and ruddy, laughing face. It was — really, and not in an oratorical sense, — the proudest day of his life.

There could be no finer sight than that of these lithe, vigorous specimens of a free, uncorrupted manhood, taking like sport the rude labor which was at once their destiny and their guard of safety against the assaults of the senses. As they bent to their work, prying, rolling, and lifting the huge sills to their places on the foundation-wall, they showed in every movement the firm yet elastic action of muscles equal to their task. Though Hallowell's barn did not rise, like the walls of Ilium, to music, a fine human harmony aided in its construction.

There was a plentiful supply of whiskey on hand, but Mark Deane assumed the charge of it, resolved that no accident or other disturbance should mar the success of this, his first raising. Everything went well, and by the time they were summoned to dinner, the sills and some of the uprights were in place, properly squared and tied.

It would require a Homeric catalogue to describe the dinner. To say that the table "groaned," is to give no idea of its condition. Mrs. Hallowell and six neighbors' wives moved from kitchen to dining-room, replenishing the dishes as fast as their contents diminished, and plying the double row of coatless guests with a most stern and exacting hospitality. The former would have been seriously mortified had not each man endeavored to eat twice his usual requirement.

After the slight rest which nature enforced — though far less than nature demanded, after such a meal — the work went on again with greater alacrity, since every timber showed. Rib by rib the great frame grew, and those perched aloft, pinning the posts and stays, rejoiced in the broad, bright landscape opened to their view. They watched the roads, in the intervals of their toil, and announced the approach of delayed guests, all alert for the sight of the first riding-habit.

Suddenly two ladies made their appearance, over the rise of the hill, one cantering lightly and securely, the other bouncing in her seat, from the rough trot of her horse.

"Look out! there they come!" cried a watcher.

"Who is it?" was asked from below.

"Where's Barton? He ought to be on hand, — it's Martha Deane, — and Sally with her; they always ride together."

Gilbert had one end of a handspike, helping lift a heavy piece of timber, and his face was dark with the strain; it was well that he dared not let go until the lively gossip which followed Barton's absence, — the latter having immediately gone forward to take charge of the horses, — had subsided. Leaning on the handspike, he panted, — not entirely from fatigue. A terrible possibility of loss flashed suddenly across his mind, revealing to him, in a new light, the desperate force and desire of his love.

There was no time for meditation; his help was again

wanted, and he expended therein the first hot tumult of his heart. By ones and twos the girls now gathered rapidly, and ere long they came out in a body to have a look at the raising. Their coming in no wise interrupted the labor; it was rather an additional stimulus, and the young men were right. Although they were not aware of the fact, they were never so handsome in their uneasy Sunday costume and awkward social ways, as thus in their free, joyous, and graceful element of labor. Greetings were interchanged, laughter and cheerful nothings animated the company, and when Martha Deane said, —

“We may be in the way, now — shall we go in?”

Mark responded, —

“No, Martha! No, girls! I’ll get twice as much work out o’ my twenty-five ‘jours,’ if you’ll only stand where you are and look at ‘em.”

“Indeed!” Sally Fairthorn exclaimed. “But we have work to do as well as you. If you men can’t get along without admiring spectators, we girls can.”

The answer which Mark would have made to this pert speech was cut short by a loud cry of pain or terror from the old half-dismantled barn on the other side of the road. All eyes were at once turned in that direction, and beheld Joe Fairthorn rushing at full speed down the bank, making for the stables below. Mark, Gilbert Potter, and Sally, being nearest, hastened to the spot.

“You’re in time!” cried Joe, clapping his hands in great glee. “I was awfully afeard he’d let go before I could git down to see him fall. Look quick — he can’t hold on much longer!”

Looking into the dusky depths, they saw Jake, hanging by his hands to the edges of a hole in the floor above, yelling and kicking for dear life.

“You wicked, wicked boy!” exclaimed Sally, turning to Joe, “what have you been doing?”

“Oh,” he answered, jerking and twisting with fearful

delight, "there was such a nice hole in the floor! I covered it all over with straw, but I had to wait ever so long before Jake stepped onto it, and then he ketched hold goin' down, and nigh spoilt the fun."

Gilbert made for the barn-floor, to succor the helpless victim; but just as his step was heard on the boards, Jake's strength gave way. His fingers slipped, and with a last howl down he dropped, eight or ten feet, upon a bed of dry manure. Then his terror was instantly changed to wrath; he bounced upon his feet, seized a piece of rotten board, and made after Joe, who, anticipating the result, was already showing his heels down the road.

Meanwhile the other young ladies had followed, and so, after discussing the incident with a mixture of amusement and horror, they betook themselves to the house, to assist in the preparations for supper. Martha Deane's eyes took in the situation, and immediately perceived that it was capable of a picturesque improvement. In front of the house stood a superb sycamore, beyond which a trellis of grape-vines divided the yard from the kitchen-garden. Here, on the cool green turf, under shade, in the bright summer air, she proposed that the tables should be set, and found little difficulty in carrying her point. It was quite convenient to the outer kitchen door, and her ready invention found means of overcoming all other technical objections. Ere long the tables were transported to the spot, the cloth laid, and the aspect of the coming entertainment grew so pleasant to the eye, that there was a special satisfaction in the labor.

An hour before sundown the frame was completed; the skeleton of the great barn rose sharp against the sky, its fresh white-oak timber gilded by the sunshine. Mark drove in the last pin, gave a joyous shout, which was answered by an irregular cheer from below, and lightly clambered down by one of the stays. Then the black jugs were produced, and passed from mouth to mouth, and the

ruddy, glowing young fellows drew their shirt-sleeves across their faces, and breathed the free, full breath of rest.

Gilbert Potter, sitting beside Mark, — the two were mutually drawn towards each other, without knowing or considering why, — had gradually worked himself into a resolution to be cool, and to watch the movements of his presumed rival. More than once, during the afternoon, he had detected Barton's eyes, fixed upon him with a more than accidental interest; looking up now, he met them again, but they were quickly withdrawn, with a shy, uneasy expression, which he could not comprehend. Was it possible that Barton conjectured the carefully hidden secret of his heart? Or had the country gossip been free with his name, in some way, during his absence? Whatever it was, the dearer interests at stake prevented him from dismissing it from his mind. He was preternaturally alert, suspicious, and sensitive.

He was therefore a little startled, when, as they were all rising in obedience to Farmer Hallowell's summons to supper, Barton suddenly took hold of his arm.

"Gilbert," said he, "we want your name in a list of young men we are getting together, for the protection of our neighborhood. There are suspicions, you know, that Sandy Flash has some friends hereabouts, though nobody seems to know exactly who they are; and our only safety is in clubbing together, to smoke him out and hunt him down, if he ever comes near us. Now, you're a good hunter" —

"Put me down, of course!" Gilbert interrupted, immensely relieved to find how wide his suspicions had fallen from the mark. "That would be a more stirring chase than our last; it is a shame and a disgrace that he is still at large."

"How many have we now?" asked Mark, who was walking on the other side of Barton.

"Twenty-one, with Gilbert," the latter replied.

"Well, as Sandy is said to count equal to twenty, we can meet him evenly, and have one to spare," laughed Mark.

"Has any one here ever seen the fellow?" asked Gilbert.

"We ought to know his marks."

"He's short, thick-set, with a red face, jet-black hair, and heavy whiskers," said Barton.

"Jet-black hair!" Mark exclaimed; "why, it's red as brick-dust! And I never heard that he wore whiskers."

"Pshaw! what was I thinking of? Red, of course — I meant red, all the time," Barton hastily assented, inwardly cursing himself for a fool. It was evident that the less he conversed about Sandy Flash, the better.

Loud exclamations of surprise and admiration interrupted them. In the shade of the sycamore, on the bright green floor of the silken turf, stood the long supper-table, snowily draped, and heaped with the richest products of cellar, kitchen, and dairy. Twelve chickens, stewed in cream, filled huge dishes at the head and foot, while hams and rounds of cold roast-beef accentuated the space between. The interstices were filled with pickles, pies, jars of marmalade, bowls of honey, and plates of cheese. Four coffee-pots steamed in readiness on a separate table, and the young ladies, doubly charming in their fresh white aprons, stood waiting to serve the tired laborers. Clumps of crown-roses, in blossom, peered over the garden-paling, the woodbine filled the air with its nutmeg odors, and a broad sheet of sunshine struck the upper boughs of the arching sycamore, and turned them into a gilded canopy for the banquet. It might have been truly said of Martha Deane, that she touched nothing which she did not adorn.

In the midst of her duties as directress of the festival, she caught a glimpse of the three men, as they approached together, somewhat in the rear of the others. The embarrassed flush had not quite faded from Barton's face, and Gilbert's was touched by a lingering sign of his new

trouble. Mark, light-hearted and laughing, precluded the least idea of mystery, but Gilbert's eye met hers with what she felt to be a painfully earnest, questioning expression. The next moment they were seated at the table, and her services were required on behalf of all.

Unfortunately for the social enjoyments of Kennett, eating had come to be regarded as a part of labor; silence and rapidity were its principal features. Board and platter were cleared in a marvellously short time, the plates changed, the dishes replenished, and then the wives and maidens took the places of the young men, who lounged off to the road-side, some to smoke their pipes, and all to gossip.

Before dusk, Giles made his appearance, with an old green bag under his arm. Barton, of course, had the credit of this arrangement, and it made him, for the time, very popular. After a pull at the bottle, Giles began to screw his fiddle, drawing now and then unearthly shrieks from its strings. The more eager of the young men thereupon stole to the house, assisted in carrying in the tables and benches, and in other ways busied themselves to bring about the moment when the aprons of the maidens could be laid aside, and their lively feet given to the dance. The moon already hung over the eastern wood, and a light breeze blew the dew-mist from the hill.

Finally, they were all gathered on the open bit of lawn between the house and the road. There was much hesitation at first, ardent coaxing and bashful withdrawal, until Martha broke the ice by boldly choosing Mark as her partner, apportioning Sally to Gilbert, and taking her place for a Scotch reel. She danced well and lightly, though in a more subdued manner than was then customary. In this respect, Gilbert resembled her; his steps, gravely measured, though sufficiently elastic, differed widely from Mark's springs, pigeon-wings, and curvets. Giles played with a will, swaying head and fiddle up and down

and beating time with his foot; and the reel went off so successfully that there was no hesitation in getting up the next dance.

Mark was alert, and secured Sally this time. Perhaps Gilbert would have made the like exchange, but Mr. Alfred Barton stepped before him, and bore off Martha. There was no appearance of design about the matter, but Gilbert felt a hot tingle in his blood, and drew back a little to watch the pair. Martha moved through the dance as if but half conscious of her partner's presence, and he seemed more intent on making the proper steps and flourishes than on improving the few brief chances for a confidential word. When he spoke, it was with the unnecessary laugh, which is meant to show ease of manner, and betrays the want of it. Gilbert was puzzled; either the two were unconscious of the gossip which linked their names so intimately, (which seemed scarcely possible,) or they were studiously concealing an actual tender relation. Among those simple-hearted people, the shyness of love rivalled the secrecy of crime, and the ways by which the lover sought to assure himself of his fortune were made very difficult by the shrinking caution with which he concealed the evidence of his passion. Gilbert knew how well the secret of his own heart was guarded, and the reflection, that others might be equally inscrutable, smote him with sudden pain.

The figures moved before him in the splendid moonlight, and with every motion of Martha's slender form the glow of his passion and the torment of his uncertainty increased. Then the dance dissolved, and while he still stood with folded arms, Sally Fairthorn's voice whispered eagerly in his ear, —

"Gilbert — Gilbert! now is your chance to engage Martha for the Virginia reel!"

"Let me choose my own partners, Sally!" he said, so sternly, that she opened wide her black eyes.

Martha, fanning herself with her handkerchief spread over a bent willow-twigg, suddenly passed before him, like an angel in the moonlight. A soft, tender star sparkled in each shaded eye, a faint rose-tint flushed her cheeks, and her lips, slightly parted to inhale the clover-scented air, were touched with a sweet, consenting smile.

"Martha!"

The word passed Gilbert's lips almost before he knew he had uttered it. Almost a whisper, but she heard, and, pausing, turned towards him.

"Will you dance with me now?"

"Am I your choice, or Sally's, Gilbert? I overheard your very independent remark."

"Mine!" he said, with only half truth. A deep color shot into his face, and he knew the moonlight revealed it, but he forced his eyes to meet hers. Her face lost its playful expression, and she said, gently,—

"Then I accept."

They took their places, and the interminable Virginia reel — under which name the old-fashioned Sir Roger de Coverley was known — commenced. It so happened that Gilbert and Mr. Alfred Barton had changed their recent places. The latter stood outside the space allotted to the dance, and appeared to watch Martha Deane and her new partner. The reviving warmth in Gilbert's bosom instantly died, and gave way to a crowd of torturing conjectures. He went through his part in the dance so abstractedly, that when they reached the bottom of the line, Martha, out of friendly consideration for him, professed fatigue and asked his permission to withdraw from the company. He gave her his arm, and they moved to one of the benches.

"You, also, seem tired, Gilbert," she said.

"Yes — no!" he answered, confusedly, feeling that he was beginning to tremble. He stood before her as she sat, moved irresolutely, as if to leave, and then, facing her with a powerful effort, he exclaimed, —

"Martha, do you know what people say about Alfred Barton and yourself?"

"It would make no difference if I did," she answered; "people will say anything."

"But is it — is it true?"

"Is what true?" she quietly asked.

"That he is to marry you!" The words were said, and ~~as~~ he would have given his life to recall them. He dropped his head, not daring to meet her eyes.

Martha Deane rose to her feet, and stood before him. Then he lifted his head; the moon shone full upon it, while her face was in shadow, but he saw the fuller light of her eye, the firmer curve of her lip.

"Gilbert Potter," she said, "what right have you to ask me such a question?"

"I have no right — none," he answered, in a voice whose suppressed, husky tones were not needed to interpret the pain and bitterness of his face. Then he quickly turned away and left her.

Martha Deane remained a minute, motionless, standing as he left her. Her heart was beating fast, and she could not immediately trust herself to rejoin the gay company. But now the dance was over, and the inseparable Sally hastened forward.

"Martha!" cried the latter, hot and indignant, "what is the matter with Gilbert? He is behaving shamefully. I saw him just now turn away from you as if you were a — a shock of corn. And the way he snapped me up — it is really outrageous!"

"It *seems* so, truly," said Martha. But she knew that Gilbert Potter loved her, and with what a love.

CHAPTER X.

THE RIVALS.

WITH the abundant harvest of that year, and the sudden and universal need of extra labor for a fortnight, Gilbert Potter would have found his burden too heavy, but for welcome help from an unexpected quarter. On the very morning that he first thrust his sickle into the ripened wheat, Deb Smith made her appearance, in a short-armed chemise and skirt of tow-cloth.

"I knowed ye'd want a hand," she said, "without sendin' to ask. I'll reap ag'inst the best man in Chester County, and you won't begrudge me my bushel o' wheat a day, when the harvest's in."

With this exordium, and a pull at the black jug under the elder-bushes in the fence-corner, she took her sickle and bent to work. It was her boast that she could beat both men and women on their own ground. She had spun her twenty-four cuts of yarn, in a day, and husked her fifty shocks of heavy corn. For Gilbert she did her best, amazing him each day with a fresh performance, and was well worth the additional daily quart of whiskey which she consumed.

In this pressing, sweltering labor, Gilbert dulled, though he could not conquer, his unhappy mood. Mary Potter, with a true mother's instinct, surmised a trouble, but the indications were too indefinite for conjecture. She could only hope that her son had not been called upon to suffer a fresh reproach, from the unremoved stain hanging over his birth.

Miss Betsy Lavender's company at this time was her greatest relief, in a double sense. No ten persons in Kennett possessed half the amount of confidences which were intrusted to this single lady; there was that in her face which said: "I only blab what I choose, and what's locked up, is locked up." This was true; she was the greatest distributor of news, and the closest receptacle of secrets — anomalous as the two characters may seem — that ever blessed a country community.

Miss Betsy, like Deb Smith, knew that she could be of service on the Potter farm, and, although her stay was perforce short, on account of an approaching house-warming near Doe-Run, her willing arms helped to tide Mary Potter over the heaviest labor of harvest. There were thus hours of afternoon rest, even in the midst of the busy season, and during one of these the mother opened her heart in relation to her son's silent, gloomy moods.

"You 'll perhaps say it's all my fancy, Betsy," she said, "and indeed I hope it is; but I know you see more than most people, and two heads are better than one. How does Gilbert seem to you?"

Miss Betsy mused awhile, with an unusual gravity on her long face. "I dunno," she remarked, at length; "I've noticed that some men have their vapors and tantrums, jist as some women have, and Gilbert's of an age to — well, Mary, has the thought of his marryin' ever come into your head?"

"No!" exclaimed Mary Potter, with almost a frightened air.

"I 'll be bound! Some women are lookin' out for daughter-in-laws before their sons have a beard, and others think theirs is only fit to wear short jackets when they ought to be raisin' up families. I dunno but what it 'll be a cross to you, Mary, — you set so much store by Gilbert, and it's natural, like, that you should want to have him all to y'rself, — but a man shall leave his father and mother

and cleave unto his wife, — or somethin' like it. Yes, I say it, although nobody clove unto me."

Mary Potter said nothing. Her face grew very pale, and such an expression of pain came into it that Miss Betsy, who saw everything without seeming to look at anything, made haste to add a consoling word.

"Indeed, Mary," she said, "now I come to consider upon it, you won't have so much of a cross. You a'n't the mother you 've showed yourself to be, if you're not anxious to see Gilbert happy, and as for leavin' his mother, there 'll be no leavin' needful, in his case, but on the contrary, quite the reverse, namely, a comin' to you. And it's no bad fortin', though I can't say it of my own experience; but never mind, all the same, I've seen the likes — to have a brisk, cheerful daughter-in-law keepin' house, and you a-settin' by the window, knittin' and restin' from mornin' till night, and maybe little caps and clothes to make, and lots o' things to teach, that young wives don't know o' theirselves. And then, after awhile you 'll be called 'Granny,' but you won't mind it, for grandchildren 's a mighty comfort, and no responsibility like your own. Why, I've knowed women that never seen what rest or comfort was, till they 'd got to be grandmothers!"

Something in this homely speech touched Mary Potter's heart, and gave her the relief of tears. "Betsy," she said at last, "I have had a heavy burden to bear, and it has made me weak."

"Made me weak," Miss Betsy repeated. "And no wonder. Don't think I can't guess that, Mary."

Here two tears trickled down the ridge of her nose, and she furtively wiped them off while adjusting her high comb. Mary Potter's face was turned towards her with a wistful, appealing expression, which she understood.

"Mary," she said, "I don't measure people with a two-foot rule. I take a ten-foot pole, and let it cover all that comes under it. Them that does their dooty to Man, I

guess won't have much trouble in squarin' accounts with the Lord. You know how I feel towards you without my tellin' of it, and them that 's quick o' the tongue a'n't always full o' the heart. Now, Mary, I know as plain as if you 'd said it, that there 's somethin' on your mind, and you dunno whether to share it with me or not. What I say is, don't hurry yourself; I 'd rather show fellow-feelin' than cur'osity; so, see your way clear first, and when the tellin' *me* anything can help, tell it — not before."

"It would n't help now," Mary Potter responded.

"Would n't help now. Then wait awhile. Nothin' 's so dangerous as speakin' before the time, whomsoever and wheresoever. Folks talk o' bridlin' the tongue; let 'em git a blind halter, say I, and a curb-bit, and a martingale! Not that I set an example, Goodness knows, for mine runs like a mill-clapper, rickety-rick, rickety-rick; but never mind, it may be fast, but it is n't loose!"

In her own mysterious way, Miss Betsy succeeded in imparting a good deal of comfort to Mary Potter. She promised "to keep Gilbert under her eyes," — which, indeed, she did, quite unconsciously to himself, during the last two days of her stay. At table she engaged him in conversation, bringing in references, in the most wonderfully innocent and random manner, to most of the families in the neighborhood. So skilfully did she operate that even Mary Potter failed to perceive her strategy. Deb Smith, sitting bare-armed on the other side of the table, and eating like six dragoons, was the ostensible target of her speech, and Gilbert was thus stealthily approached in flank. When she tied her bonnet-strings to leave, and the mother accompanied her to the gate, she left this indefinite consolation behind her:

"Keep up your sperrits, Mary. I think I 'm on the right scent about Gilbert, but these young men are shy foxes. Let me alone, awhile yet, and whatever you do, let *him* alone. There 's no danger — not even a snarl, I

guess. Nothin' to bother your head about, if you were n't his mother. Good luck ! if I 'm right, you 'll see no more o' his tantrums in two months' time — and so, good-bye to you ! ”

The oats followed close upon the wheat harvest, and there was no respite from labor until the last load was hauled into the barn, filling its ample bays to the very rafters. Then Gilbert, mounted on his favorite Roger rode up to Kennett Square one Saturday afternoon, in obedience to a message from Mr. Alfred Barton, informing him that the other gentlemen would there meet to consult measures for mutual protection against highwaymen in general and Sandy Flash in particular. As every young man in the neighborhood owned his horse and musket, nothing more was necessary than to adopt a system of action.

The meeting was held in the bar-room of the Unicorn, and as every second man had his own particular scheme to advocate, it was both long and noisy. Many thought the action unnecessary, but were willing, for the sake of the community, to give their services. The simplest plan — to choose a competent leader, and submit to his management — never occurred to these free and independent volunteers, until all other means of unity had failed. Then Alfred Barton, as the originator of the measure, was chosen, and presented the rude but sufficient plan which had been suggested to him by Dr. Deane. The men were to meet every Saturday evening at the Unicorn, and exchange intelligence ; but they could be called together at any time by a summons from Barton. The landlord of the Unicorn was highly satisfied with this arrangement, but no one noticed the interest with which the ostler, an Irishman named Dougherty, listened to the discussion.

Barton's horse was hitched beside Gilbert's, and as the two were mounting, the former said, —

“ If you 're going home, Gilbert, why not come down

our lane, and go through by Carson's. We can talk the matter over a little; if there 's any running to do, I depend a good deal on your horse."

Gilbert saw no reason for declining this invitation, and the two rode side by side down the lane to the Barton farm-house. The sun was still an hour high, but a fragrant odor of broiled herring drifted out of the open kitchen-window. Barton thereupon urged him to stop and take supper, with a cordiality which we can only explain by hinting at his secret intention to become the purchaser of Gilbert's horse.

"Old-man Barton" was sitting in his arm-chair by the window, feebly brandishing his stick at the flies, and watching his daughter Ann, as she transferred the herrings from the gridiron to a pewter platter.

"Father, this is Gilbert Potter," said Mr. Alfred, introducing his guest.

The bent head was lifted with an effort, and the keen eyes were fixed on the young man, who came forward to take the crooked, half-extended hand.

"What Gilbert Potter?" he croaked.

Mr. Alfred bit his lips, and looked both embarrassed and annoyed. But he could do no less than say, —

"Mary Potter's son."

Gilbert straightened himself proudly, as if to face a coming insult. After a long, steady gaze, the old man gave one of his hieroglyphic snorts, and then muttered to himself, — "Looks like her."

During the meal, he was so occupied with the labor of feeding himself, that he seemed to forget Gilbert's presence. Bending his head sideways, from time to time, he jerked out a croaking question, which his son, whatever annoyance he might feel, was forced to answer according to the old man's humor.

"In at the Doctor's, boy?"

"A few minutes, daddy, before we came together."

"See her? Was she at home?"

"Yes," came very shortly from Mr. Alfred's lips; he clenched his fists under the table-cloth.

"That's right, boy; stick up to her!" and he chuckled and munched together in a way which it made Gilbert sick to hear. The tail of the lean herring on his plate remained untasted; he swallowed the thin tea which Miss Ann poured out, and the heavy "half-Indian" bread with a choking sensation. He had but one desire, — to get away from the room, out of human sight and hearing.

Barton, ill at ease, and avoiding Gilbert's eye, accompanied him to the lane. He felt that the old man's garrulity ought to be explained, but knew not what to say. Gilbert spared him the trouble.

"When are we to wish you joy, Barton?" he asked, in a cold, hard voice.

Barton laughed in a forced way, clutched at his tawny whisker, and with something like a flush on his heavy face, answered in what was meant to be an indifferent tone:

"Oh, it's a joke of the old man's — don't mean anything."

"It seems to be a joke of the whole neighborhood, then; I have heard it from others."

"Have you?" Barton eagerly asked. "Do people talk about it much? What do they say?"

This exhibition of vulgar vanity, as he considered it, was so repulsive to Gilbert, in his desperate, excited condition, that for a moment he did not trust himself to speak. Holding the bridle of his horse, he walked mechanically down the slope, Barton following him.

Suddenly he stopped, faced the latter, and said, in a stern voice: "I must know, first, whether you are betrothed to Martha Deane."

His manner was so unexpectedly solemn and peremptory that Barton, startled from his self-possession, stammered, —

"N—no: that is, not yet."

Another pause. Barton, curious to know how far gossip had already gone, repeated the question :

"Well, what do people say?"

"Some, that you and she will be married," Gilbert answered, speaking slowly and with difficulty, "and some that you won't. Which are right?"

"Damme, if I know!" Barton exclaimed, returning to his customary swagger. It was quite enough that the matter was generally talked about, and he had said nothing to settle it, in either way. But his manner, more than his words, convinced Gilbert that there was no betrothal as yet, and that the vanity of being regarded as the successful suitor of a lovely girl had a more prominent place than love, in his rival's heart. By so much was his torture lightened, and the passion of the moment subsided, after having so nearly betrayed itself.

"I say, Gilbert," Barton presently remarked, walking on towards the bars which led into the meadow-field; "it's time you were looking around in that way, hey?"

"It will be time enough when I am out of debt."

"But you ought, now, to have a wife in your house."

"I have a mother, Barton."

"That's true, Gilbert. Just as I have a father. The old man's queer, as you saw — kept me out of marrying when I was young, and now drives me to it. I might ha had children grown" —

He paused, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. Gilbert fancied that he saw on Barton's coarse, dull face, the fleeting stamp of some long-buried regret, and a little of the recent bitterness died out of his heart.

"Good-bye!" he said, offering his hand with greater ease than he would have thought possible, fifteen minutes sooner.

"Good-bye, Gilbert! Take care of Roger. Sandy Flash has a fine piece of horse-flesh, but you beat him once — Damnation! You *could* beat him, I mean. If he

comes within ten miles of us, I 'll have the summonses out in no time."

Gilbert cantered lightly down the meadow. The soft breath of the summer evening fanned his face, and something of the peace expressed in the rich repose of the landscape fell upon his heart. But peace, he felt, could only come to him through love. The shame upon his name — the slow result of labor — even the painful store of memories which the years had crowded in his brain — might all be lightly borne, or forgotten, could his arms once clasp the now uncertain treasure. A tender mist came over his deep, dark eyes, a passionate longing breathed in his softened lips, and he said to himself, —

"I would lie down and die at her feet, if that could make her happy; but how to live, and live without her?" This was a darkness which his mind refused to entertain. Love sees no justice on Earth or in Heaven, that includes not its own fulfilled desire.

Before reaching home, he tried to review the situation calmly. Barton's true relation to Martha Deane he partially suspected, so far as regarded the former's vanity and his slavish subservience to his father's will; but he was equally avaricious, and it was well known in Kennett that Martha possessed, or would possess, a handsome property in her own right. Gilbert, therefore, saw every reason to believe that Barton was an actual, if not a very passionate wooer.

That fact, however, was in itself of no great importance, unless Dr. Deane favored the suit. The result depended on Martha herself; she was called an "independent girl," which she certainly was, by contrast with other girls of the same age. It was this free, firm, independent, yet wholly womanly spirit which Gilbert honored in her, and which (unless her father's influence were too powerful) would yet save her to him, if she but loved him. Then he felt that his nervous, inflammable fear of Barton was

incompatible with true honor for her, with trust in her pure and lofty nature. If she were so easily swayed, how could she stand the test which he was still resolved — nay, forced by circumstances — to apply?

With something like shame of his past excitement, yet with strength which had grown out of it, his reflections were terminated by Roger stopping at the barn-yard gate.

CHAPTER XI.

GUESTS AT POTTER'S.

A WEEK or two later, there was trouble, but not of a very unusual kind, in the Fairthorn household. It was Sunday, the dinner was on the table, but Joe and Jake were not to be found. The garden, the corn-crib, the barn, and the grove below the house, were searched, without detecting the least sign of the truants. Finally Sally's eyes descried a remarkable object moving over the edge of the hill, from the direction of the Philadelphia road. It was a huge round creature, something like a cylindrical tortoise, slowly advancing upon four short, dark legs.

"What upon earth is that?" she cried.

All eyes were brought to bear upon this phenomenon which gradually advanced until it reached the fence. Then it suddenly separated into three parts, the round back falling off, whereupon it was seized by two figures and lifted upon the fence.

"It 's the best wash-tub, I do declare!" said Sally; "whatever have they been doing with it?"

Having crossed the fence, the boys lifted the inverted tub over their heads, and resumed their march. When they came near enough, it could be seen that their breeches and stockings were not only dripping wet, but streaked with black swamp-mud. This accounted for the unsteady, hesitating course of the tub, which at times seemed inclined to approach the house, and then tacked away towards the corner of the barn-yard wall. A few vigorous calls, how-

ever, appeared to convince it that the direct course was the best, for it set out with a grotesque bobbing trot, which brought it speedily to the kitchen-door.

Then Joe and Jake crept out, dripping to the very crowns of their heads, with their Sunday shirts and jackets in a horrible plight. The truth, slowly gathered from their mutual accusations, was this: they had resolved to have a boating excursion on Redley Creek, and had abstracted the tub that morning when nobody was in the kitchen. Slipping down through the wood, they had launched it in a piece of still water. Joe got in first, and when Jake let go of the tub, it tilted over; then he held it for Jake, who squatted in the centre, and floated successfully down the stream until Joe pushed him with a pole, and made the tub lose its balance. Jake fell into the mud, and the tub drifted away; they had chased it nearly to the road before they recovered it.

"You bad boys, what shall I do with you?" cried Mother Fairthorn. "Put on your every-day clothes, and go to the garret. Sally, you can ride down to Potter's with the pears; they won't keep, and I expect Gilbert has no time to come for any, this summer."

"I'll go," said Sally, "but Gilbert don't deserve it. The way he snapped me up at Hallowell's — and he has n't been here since!"

"Don't be hard on him, Sally!" said the kindly old woman; nor was Sally's more than a surface grudge. She had quite a sisterly affection for Gilbert, and was rather hurt than angered by what he had said in the fret of a mood which she could not comprehend.

The old mare rejoiced in a new bridle, with a head-stall of scarlet morocco, and Sally would have made a stately appearance, but for the pears, which, stowed in the two ends of a grain-bag, and hung over the saddle, would not quite be covered by her riding-skirt. She trudged on slowly, down the lonely road, but had barely crossed the

level below Kennett Square, when there came a quick sound of hoofs behind her.

It was Mark and Martha Deane, who presently drew rein, one on either side of her.

"Don't ride fast, please," Sally begged; "*I can't, for fear of smashing the pears. Where are you going?*"

"To Falconer's," Martha replied; "Fanny promised to lend me some new patterns; but I had great trouble in getting Mark to ride with me."

"Not, if you will ride along, Sally," Mark rejoined. "We'll go with you first, and then you'll come with us. What do you say, Martha?"

"I'll answer for Martha!" cried Sally; "I am going to Potter's, and it's directly on your way."

"Just the thing," said Mark; "I have a little business with Gilbert."

It was all settled before Martha's vote had been taken, and she accepted the decision without remark. She was glad, for Sally's sake, that they had fallen in with her, for she had shrewdly watched Mark, and found that, little by little, a serious liking for her friend was sending its roots down through the gay indifference of his surface mood. Perhaps she was not altogether calm in spirit at the prospect of meeting Gilbert Potter; but, if so, no sign of the agitation betrayed itself in her face.

Gilbert, sitting on the porch, half-hidden behind a mass of blossoming trumpet-flower, was aroused from his Sabbath reverie by the sound of hoofs. Sally Fairthorn's voice followed, reaching even the ears of Mary Potter, who thereupon issued from the house to greet the unexpected guest. Mark had already dismounted, and although Sally protested that she would remain in the saddle, the strong arms held out to her proved too much of a temptation; it was so charming to put her hands on his shoulders, and to have his take her by the waist, and lift her to the ground so lightly!

While Mark was performing this service, (and evidently with as much deliberation as possible,) Gilbert could do no less than offer his aid to Martha Deane, whose sudden apparition he had almost incredulously realized. A bright, absorbing joy kindled his sad, strong features into beauty, and Martha felt her cheeks grow warm, in spite of herself, as their eyes met. The hands that touched her waist were firm, but no hands had ever before conveyed to her heart such a sense of gentleness and tenderness, and though her own gloved hand rested but a moment on his shoulder, the action seemed to her almost like a caress.

"How kind of you — all — to come!" said Gilbert, feeling that his voice expressed too much, and his words too little.

"The credit of coming is not mine, Gilbert," she answered. "We overtook Sally, and gave her our company for the sake of hers, afterwards. But I shall like to take a look at your place; how pleasant you are making it!"

"You are the first to say so; I shall always remember that!"

Mary Potter now advanced, with grave yet friendly welcome, and would have opened her best room to the guests, but the bowery porch, with its swinging scarlet bloom, haunted by humming-birds and hawk-moths, wooed them to take their seats in its shade. The noise of a plunging cascade, which restored the idle mill-water to its parted stream, made a mellow, continuous music in the air. The high road was visible at one point, across the meadow, just where it entered the wood; otherwise, the seclusion of the place was complete.

"You could not have found a lovelier home, M—Mary," said Martha, terrified to think how near the words "*Mrs.* Potter" had been to her lips. But she had recovered herself so promptly that the hesitation was not noticed.

"Many people think the house ought to be upon the

road," Mary Potter replied, "but Gilbert and I like it as it is. Yes, I hope it will be a good home, when we can call it our own."

"Mother is a little impatient," said Gilbert, "and perhaps I am also. But if we have health, it won't be very long to wait."

"That's a thing soon learned!" cried Mark. "I mean to be impatient. Why, when I was doing journey-work, I was as careless as the day's long, and so from hand to mouth did n't trouble me a bit; but now, I ha' n't been undertaking six months, and it seems that I feel worried if I don't get all the jobs going!"

Martha smiled, well pleased at this confession of the change, which she knew better how to interpret than Mark himself. But Sally, in her innocence, remarked:

"Oh Mark! that is n't right."

"I suppose it is n't. But maybe you've got to wish for more than you get, in order to get what you do. I guess I take things pretty easy, on the whole, for it's nobody's nature to be entirely satisfied. Gilbert, will you be satisfied when your farm's paid for?"

"No!" answered Gilbert with an emphasis, the sound of which, as soon as uttered, smote him to the heart. He had not thought of his mother. She clasped her hands convulsively, and looked at him, but his face was turned away.

"Why, Gilbert!" exclaimed Sally.

"I mean," he said, striving to collect his thoughts, "that there is something more than property" — but how should he go on? Could he speak of the family relation, then and there? Of honor in the community, the respect of his neighbors, without seeming to refer to the brand upon his and his mother's name? No; of none of these things. With sudden energy, he turned upon himself, and continued:

"I shall not feel satisfied until I am cured of my own

impatience — until I can better control my temper, and get the weeds and rocks and stumps out of myself as well as out of my farm."

"Then you've got a job!" Mark laughed. "I think your fields are pretty tolerable clean, what I've seen of 'em. Nobody can say they're not well fenced in. Why, compared with you, I'm an open common, like the Wastelands, down on Whitely Creek, and everybody's cattle run over me!"

Mark's thoughtlessness was as good as tact. They all laughed heartily at his odd continuation of the simile, and Martha hastened to say:

"For my part, I don't think you are quite such an open common, Mark, or Gilbert so well fenced in. But even if you are, a great many things may be hidden in a clearing, and some people are tall enough to look over a high hedge. Betsy Lavender says some men tell all about themselves without saying a word, while others talk till Doomsday and tell nothing."

"And tell nothing," gravely repeated Mark, whereat no one could repress a smile, and Sally laughed outright.

Mary Potter had not mingled much in the society of Kennett, and did not know that this imitation of good Miss Betsy was a very common thing, and had long ceased to mean any harm. It annoyed her, and she felt it her duty to say a word for her friend.

"There is not a better or kinder-hearted woman in the county," she said, "than just Betsy Lavender. With all her odd ways of speech, she talks the best of sense and wisdom, and I don't know who I'd sooner take for a guide in times of trouble."

"You could not give Betsy a higher place than she deserves," Martha answered. "We all esteem her as a dear friend, and as the best helper where help is needed. She has been almost a mother to me."

Sally felt rebuked, and exclaimed tearfully, with her

usual impetuous candor, — “Now you know I meant no harm; it was all Mark’s doing!”

“If you’ve anything against me, Sally, I forgive you for it. It is n’t in my nature to bear malice,” said Mark, with so serious an air, that poor Sally was more bewildered than ever. Gilbert and Martha, however, could not restrain their laughter at the fellow’s odd, reckless humor, whereupon Sally, suddenly comprehending the joke, sprang from her seat. Mark leaped from the porch, and darted around the house, followed by Sally with mock-angry cries and brandishings of her riding-whip.

The scene was instantly changed to Gilbert’s eyes. It was wonderful! There, on the porch of the home he so soon hoped to call his own, sat his mother, Martha Deane, and himself. The two former had turned towards each other, and were talking pleasantly; the hum of the hawk-moths, the mellow plunge of the water, and the stir of the soft summer breeze in the leaves, made a sweet accompaniment to their voices. His brain grew dizzy with yearning to fix that chance companionship, and make it the boundless fortune of his life. Under his habit of repression, his love for her had swelled and gathered to such an intensity, that it seemed he must either speak or die.

Presently the rollicking couple made their appearance. Sally’s foot had caught in her riding-skirt as she ran, throwing her at full length on the sward, and Mark, in picking her up, had possessed himself of the whip. She was not hurt in the least, (her life having been a succession of tears and tumbles,) but Mark’s arm found it necessary to encircle her waist, and she did not withdraw from the support until they came within sight of the porch.

It was now time for the guests to leave, but Mary Potter must first produce her cakes and currant-wine, — the latter an old and highly superior article, for there had been, alas! too few occasions which called for its use.

“Gilbert,” said Mark, as they moved towards the gate,

"why can't you catch and saddle Roger, and ride with us
You have nothing to do?"

"No; I would like — but where are you going?"

"To Falconer's; that is, the girls; but we won't stay
for supper — I don't fancy quality company."

"Nor I," said Gilbert, with a gloomy face. "I have
never visited Falconer's, and they might not thank you
for introducing me."

He looked at Martha, as he spoke. She understood
him, and gave him her entire sympathy and pity, — yet
it was impossible for her to propose giving up the visit,
solely for his sake. It was not want of independence, but
a maidenly shrinking from the inference of the act, which
kept her silent.

Mark, however, cut through the embarrassment. "I'll
tell you what, Gilbert!" he exclaimed, "you go and get
Roger from the field, while we ride on to Falconer's. If
the girls will promise not to be too long about their pat-
terns and their gossip, and what not, we can be back to
the lane-end by the time you get there; then we'll ride
up t' other branch o' Redley Creek, to the cross-road, and
out by Hallowell's. I want to have a squint at the houses
and barns down that way; nothing like business, you
know!"

Mark thought he was very cunning in thus disposing of
Martha during the ride, unconscious of the service he was
offering to Gilbert. The latter's eagerness shone from
his eyes, but still he looked at Martha, trembling for a
sign that should decide his hesitation. Her lids fell before
his gaze, and a faint color came into her face, yet she did
not turn away. This time it was Sally Fairthorn who
spoke.

"Five minutes will be enough for us, Mark," she said
"I'm not much acquainted with Fanny Falconer. So,
Gilbert, hoist Martha into her saddle, and go for Roger."

He opened the gate for them, and then climbed over

the fence into the hill-field above his house. Having reached the crest, he stopped to watch the three riding abreast, on a smart trot, down the glen. Sally looked back, saw him, and waved her hand ; then Mark and Martha turned, giving no sign, yet to his eyes there seemed a certain expectancy in the movement.

Roger came from the farthest corner of the field at his call, and followed him down the hill to the bars, with the obedient attachment of a dog. When he had carefully brushed and then saddled the horse, he went to seek his mother, who was already making preparations for their early supper.

"Mother," he said, "I am going to ride a little way."

She looked at him wistfully and questioningly, as if she would fain have asked more ; but only said, —

"Won't you be home to supper, Gilbert?"

"I can't tell, but don't wait a minute, if I'm not here when it's ready."

He turned quickly, as if fearful of a further question, and the next moment was in the saddle.

The trouble in Mary Potter's face increased. Sighing sorely, she followed to the bridge of the barn, and presently descried him, beyond the mill, cantering lightly down the road. Then, lifting her arms, as in a blind appeal for help, she let them fall again, and walked slowly back to the house.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EVENTS OF AN EVENING.

At the first winding of the creek, Gilbert drew rein, with a vague, half-conscious sense of escape. The eye which had followed him thus far was turned away at last.

For half a mile the road lay through a lovely solitude of shade and tangled bowery thickets, beside the stream. The air was soft and tempered, and filled the glen like the breath of some utterly peaceful and happy creature; yet over Gilbert's heart there brooded another atmosphere than this. The su^lriness that precedes an emotional crisis weighed heavily upon him.

No man, to whom Nature has granted her highest gift, — that of expression, — can understand the pain endured by one of strong feelings, to whom not only this gift has been denied, but who must also wrestle with an inherited reticence. It is well that in such cases a kindly law exists, to aid the helpless heart. The least portion of the love which lights the world has been told in words; it works, attracts, and binds in silence. The eye never knows its own desire, the hand its warmth, the voice its tenderness, nor the heart its unconscious speech through these, and a thousand other vehicles. Every endeavor to hide the special fact betrays the feeling from which it sprang.

Like all men of limited culture, Gilbert felt his helplessness keenly. His mind, usually clear in its operations, if somewhat slow and cautious, refused to assist him here; it lay dead or apathetic in an air surcharged with passion. An anxious expectancy enclosed him with stifling pressure;

he felt that it must be loosened, but knew not how. His craving for words—words swift, clear, and hot as lightning, through which his heart might discharge itself—haunted him like a furious hunger.

The road, rising out of the glen, passed around the brow of a grassy hill, whence he could look across a lateral valley to the Falconer farm-house. Pausing here, he plainly descried a stately “chair” leaning on its thills, in the shade of the weeping-willow, three horses hitched side by side to the lane-fence, and a faint glimmer of color between the mounds of box which almost hid the porch. It was very evident to his mind that the Falconers had other visitors, and that neither Mark nor Sally, (whatever might be Martha Deane’s inclination,) would be likely to prolong their stay; so he slowly rode on, past the lane-end, and awaited them at the ford beyond.

It was not long—though the wood on the western hill already threw its shadow into the glen—before the sound of voices and hoofs emerged from the lane. Sally’s remark reached him first:

“They may be nice people enough, for aught I know, but their ways are not my ways, and there’s no use in trying to mix them.”

“That’s a fact!” said Mark. “Hallo, here’s Gilbert, ahead of us!”

They rode into the stream together, and let their horses drink from the clear, swift-flowing water. In Mark’s and Sally’s eyes, Gilbert was as grave and impassive as usual, but Martha Deane was conscious of a strange, warm, subtle power, which seemed to envelop her as she drew near him. Her face glowed with a sweet, unaccustomed flush; his was pale, and the shadow of his brows lay heavier upon his eyes. Fate was already taking up the invisible, floating filaments of these two existences, and weaving them together.

Of course it happened, and of course by the purest acci-

dent, that Mark and Sally first reached the opposite bank, and took the narrow wood-road, where the loose, briery sprays of the thickets brushed them on either side. Sally's hat, and probably her head, would have been carried off by a projecting branch, had not Mark thrown his arm around her neck and forcibly bent her forwards. Then she shrieked and struck at him with her riding-whip, while Mark's laugh woke all the echoes of the woods.

"I say, Gilbert!" he cried, turning back in his saddle, "I'll hold *you* responsible for Martha's head; it's as much as *I* can do to keep Sally's on her shoulders."

Gilbert looked at his companion, as she rode slowly by his side, through the cool, mottled dusk of the woods. She had drawn the strings of her beaver through a button-hole of her riding-habit, and allowed it to hang upon her back. The motion of the horse gave a gentle, undulating grace to her erect, self-reliant figure, and her lips, slightly parted, breathed maidenly trust and consent. She turned her face towards him and smiled, at Mark's words.

"The warning is unnecessary," he said. "You will give me no chance to take care of you, Martha."

"Is it not better so?" she asked.

He hesitated; he would have said "No," but finally evaded a direct answer.

"I would be glad enough to do you a service — even so little as that," were his words, and the tender tone in which they were spoken made itself evident to his own ears.

"I don't doubt it, Gilbert," she answered, so kindly and cordially that he was smitten to the heart. Had she faltered in her reply, — had she blushed and kept silence, — his hope would have seized the evidence and rushed to the trial; but this was the frankness of friendship, not the timidity of love. She could not, then, suspect his passion, and ah, how the risks of its utterance were multiplied!

Meanwhile, the wonderful glamour of her presence — that irresistible influence which at once takes hold of body

and spirit — had entered into every cell of his blood. Thought and memory were blurred into nothingness by this one overmastering sensation. Riding through the lonely woods, out of shade into yellow, level sunshine, in the odors of minty meadows and moist spices of the creek-side, they twain seemed to him to be alone in the world. If they loved not each other, why should not the leaves shrivel and fall, the hills split asunder, and the sky rain death upon them? Here she moved at his side — he could stretch out his hand and touch her; his heart sprang towards her, his arms ached for very yearning to clasp her, — his double nature demanded her with the will and entreated for her with the affection! Under all, felt though not suspected, glowed the vast primal instinct upon which the strength of manhood and of womanhood is based.

Sally and Mark, a hundred yards in advance, now thrown into sight and now hidden by the windings of the road, were so pleasantly occupied with each other that they took no heed of the pair behind them. Gilbert was silent; speech was mockery, unless it gave the words which he did not dare to pronounce. His manner was sullen and churlish in Martha's eyes, he suspected; but so it must be, unless a miracle were sent to aid him. She, riding as quietly, seemed to meditate, apparently unconscious of his presence; how could he know that she had never before been so vitally conscious of it?

The long rays of sunset withdrew to the tree-tops, and a deeper hush fell upon the land. The road which had mounted along the slope of a stubble-field, now dropped again into a wooded hollow, where a tree, awkwardly felled, lay across it. Roger pricked up his ears and leaped lightly over. Martha's horse followed, taking the log easily, but she reined him up the next moment, uttering a slight exclamation, and stretched out her hand wistfully towards Gilbert.

To seize it and bring Roger to a stand was the work of an instant. "What is the matter, Martha?" he cried.

"I think the girth is broken," said she. "The saddle is loose, and I was nigh losing my balance. Thank you I can sit steadily now."

Gilbert sprang to the ground and hastened to her assistance.

"Yes, it is broken," he said, "but I can give you mine. You had better dismount, though; see, I will hold the pommel firm with one hand, while I lift you down with the other. Not too fast, I am strong; place your hands on my shoulders — so!"

She bent forward and laid her hands upon his shoulders. Then, as she slid gently down, his right arm crept around her waist, holding her so firmly and securely that she had left the saddle and hung in its support while her feet had not yet touched the earth. Her warm breath was on Gilbert's forehead; her bosom swept his breast, and the arm that until then had supported, now swiftly, tenderly, irresistibly embraced her. Trembling, thrilling from head to foot, utterly unable to control the mad impulse of the moment, he drew her to his heart and laid his lips to hers. All that he would have said — all, and more than all, that words could have expressed — was now said, without words. His kiss clung as if it were the last this side of death — clung until he felt that Martha feebly strove to be released.

The next minute they stood side by side, and Gilbert, by a revulsion equally swift and overpowering, burst into a passion of tears.

He turned and leaned his head against Roger's neck. Presently a light touch came upon his shoulder.

"Gilbert!"

He faced her then, and saw that her own cheeks were wet. "Martha!" he cried, "unless you love me with a love like mine for you, you can never forgive me!"

She came nearer ; she laid her arms around him, and lifted her face to his. Then she said, in a tender, tremulous whisper, —

“ Gilbert — Gilbert ! I forgive you.”

A pang of wonderful, incredulous joy shot through his heart. Exalted by his emotion above the constraints of his past and present life, he arose and stood free and strong in his full stature as a man. He held her softly and tenderly embraced, and a purer bliss than the physical delight of her warm, caressing presence shone upon his face as he asked, —

“ Forever, Martha ? ”

“ Forever.”

“ Knowing what I am ? ”

“ Because I know what you are, Gilbert ! ”

He bowed his head upon her shoulder, and she felt softer tears — tears which came this time without sound or pang — upon her neck. It was infinitely touching to see this strong nature so moved, and the best bliss that a true woman’s heart can feel — the knowledge of the boundless bounty which her love brings with it — opened upon her consciousness. A swift instinct revealed to her the painful struggles of Gilbert’s life, — the stern, reticent strength they had developed, — the anxiety and the torture of his long-suppressed passion, and the power and purity of that devotion with which his heart had sought and claimed her. She now saw him in his true character, — firm as steel, yet gentle as dew, patient and passionate, and purposely cold only to guard the sanctity of his emotions.

The twilight deepened in the wood, and Roger, stretching and shaking himself, called the lovers to themselves. Gilbert lifted his head and looked into Martha’s sweet, unshrinking eyes.

“ May the Lord bless you, as you have blessed me ! ” he said, solemnly. “ Martha, did you guess this before ? ”

“ Yes,” she answered, “ I felt that it must be so.”

"And you did not draw back from me — you did not shun the thought of me! You were" —

He paused: was there not blessing enough, or must he curiously question its growth?

Martha, however, understood the thought in his mind. "No, Gilbert!" she said, "I cannot truly say that I loved you at the time when I first discovered your feeling towards me. I had always esteemed and trusted you, and you were much in my mind; but when I asked myself if I could look upon you as my husband, my heart hesitated with the answer. I did not deserve your affection then, because I could not repay it in the same measure. But, although the knowledge seemed to disturb me, sometimes, yet it was very grateful, and therefore I could not quite make up my mind to discourage you. Indeed, I knew not what was right to do, but I found myself more and more strongly drawn towards you; a power came from you when we met, that touched and yet strengthened me, and then I thought, 'Perhaps I *do* love him.' To-day, when I first saw your face, I knew that I did. I felt your heart calling to me like one that cries for help, and mine answered. It has been slow to speak, Gilbert, but I know it has spoken truly at last!"

He replaced the broken girth, lifted her into the saddle, mounted his own horse, and they resumed their ride along the dusky valley. But how otherwise their companionship now!

"Martha," said Gilbert, leaning towards her and touching her softly as he spoke, as if fearful that some power in his words might drive them apart, — "Martha, have you considered what I am called? That the family name I bear is in itself a disgrace? Have you imagined what it is to love one so dishonored as I am?"

The delicate line of her upper lip grew clear and firm again, temporarily losing its relaxed gentleness. "I have thought of it," she answered, "but not in that way. Gil-

bert, I honored you before I loved you. I will not say that this thing makes no difference, for it does — a difference in the name men give you, a difference in your work through life (for you must deserve more esteem to gain as much as other men) — and a difference in my duty towards you. They call me ‘independent,’ Gilbert, because, though a woman, I dare to think for myself; I know not whether they mean praise by the word, or no; but I think it would frighten away the thought of love from many men. It has not frightened you; and you, however you were born, are the faithfullest and best man I know. I love you with my whole heart, and I will be true to you!”

With these words, Martha stretched out her hand. Gilbert took and held it, bowing his head fondly over it, and inwardly thanking God that the test which his pride had exacted was over at last. He could reward her truth, spare her the willing sacrifice, — and he would.

“Martha,” he said, “if I sometimes doubted whether you could share my disgrace, it was because I had bitter cause to feel how heavy it is to bear. God knows I would have come to you with a clean and honorable name, if I could have been patient to wait longer in uncertainty. But I could not tell how long the time might be, — I could not urge my mother, nor even ask her to explain” —

“No, no, Gilbert! Spare *her*!” Martha interrupted.

“I *have*, Martha, — God bless you for the words! — and I *will*; it would be the worst wickedness not to be patient, now! But I have not yet told you” —

A loud halloo rang through the dusk.

“It is Mark’s voice,” said Martha; “answer him!”

Gilbert shouted, and a double cry instantly replied. They had reached the cross-road from New-Garden, and Mark and Sally, who had been waiting impatiently for a quarter of an hour, rode to meet them. “Did you lose the road?” “Whatever kept you so long?” were the simultaneous questions.

"My girth broke in jumping over the tree," Martha answered, in her clear, untroubled voice. "I should have been thrown off, but for Gilbert's help. He had to give me his own girth, and so we have ridden slowly, since he has none."

"Take my breast-strap," said Mark.

"No," said Gilbert, "I can ride Roger bareback, if need be, with the saddle on my shoulder."

Something in his voice struck Mark and Sally singularly. It was grave and subdued, yet sweet in its tones as never before; he had not yet descended from the solemn exaltation of his recent mood. But the dusk sheltered his face, and its new brightness was visible only to Martha's eyes.

Mark and Sally again led the way, and the lovers followed in silence up the hill, until they struck the Wilming-ton road, below Hallowell's. Here Gilbert felt that it was best to leave them.

"Well, you two are cheerful company!" exclaimed Sally, as they checked their horses. "Martha, how many words has Gilbert spoken to you this evening?"

"As many as I have spoken to him," Martha answered; "but I will say three more, — Good-night, Gilbert!"

"Good-night!" was all he dared say, in return, but the pressure of his hand burned long upon her fingers.

He rode homewards in the starlight, transformed by love and gratitude, proud, tender, strong to encounter any fate. His mother sat in the lonely kitchen, with the New Testament in her lap; she had tried to read, but her thoughts wandered from the consoling text. The table was but half-cleared, and the little old teapot still squatted beside the coals.

Gilbert strove hard to assume his ordinary manner, but he could not hide the radiant happiness that shone from his eyes and sat upon his lips.

"You've not had supper?" Mary Potter asked.

"No, mother! but I'm sorry you kept things waiting; I can do well enough without."

"It's not right to go without your regular meals, Gilbert. Sit up to the table!"

She poured out the tea, and Gilbert ate and drank in silence. His mother said nothing, but he knew that her eye was upon him, and that he was the subject of her thoughts. Once or twice he detected a wistful, questioning expression, which, in his softened mood, touched him almost like a reproach.

When the table had been cleared and everything put away, she resumed her seat, breathing an unconscious sigh as she dropped her hands into her lap. Gilbert felt that he must now speak, and only hesitated while he considered how he could best do so, without touching her secret and mysterious trouble.

"Mother!" he said at last, "I have something to tell you."

"Ay, Gilbert?"

"Maybe it'll seem good news to you; but maybe not. I have asked Martha Deane to be my wife!"

He paused, and looked at her. She clasped her hands, leaned forward, and fixed her dark, mournful eyes intently upon his face.

"I have been drawn towards her for a long time," Gilbert continued. "It has been a great trouble to me, because she is so pretty, and withal so proud in the way a girl should be,—I liked her pride, even while it made me afraid,—and they say she is rich also. It might seem like looking too high, mother, but I could n't help it."

"There's no woman too high for you, Gilbert!" Mary Potter exclaimed. Then she went on, in a hurried, unsteady voice: "It is n't that—I mistrusted it would come so, some day, but I hoped—only for your good, my boy, only for that—I hoped not so soon. You're still young

—not twenty-five, and there 's debt on the farm; — could n't you ha' waited a little, Gilbert?"

"I have waited, mother," he said, slightly turning away his head, that he might not see the tender reproach in her face, which her question seemed to imply. "*I did wait* — and for that reason. I wanted first to be independent, at least; and I doubt that I would have spoken so soon, but there were others after Martha, and that put the thought of losing her into my head. It seemed like a matter of life or death. Alfred Barton tried to keep company with her — he did n't deny it to my face; the people talked of it. Folks always say more than they know, to be sure, but then, the chances were so much against *me*, mother! I was nigh crazy, sometimes. I tried my best and bravest to be patient, but to-day we were riding alone, — Mark and Sally gone ahead, — and — and then it came from my mouth, I don't know how; I did n't expect it. But I should n't have doubted Martha; she let me speak; she answered me — I can't tell you her words, mother, though I'll never forget one single one of 'em to my dying day. She gave me her hand and said she would be true to me forever."

Gilbert waited, as if his mother might here speak, but she remained silent.

"Do you understand, mother?" he continued. "She pledged herself to me — she will be my wife. And I asked her — you won't be hurt, for I felt it to be my duty — whether she knew how disgraced I was in the eyes of the people, — whether my name would not be a shame for her to bear? She could n't know what we know: she took me even with the shame, — and she looked prouder than ever when she stood by me in the thought of it! She would despise me, now, if I should offer to give her up on account of it, but she may know as much as I do, mother? She deserves it."

There was no answer. Gilbert looked up

Mary Potter sat perfectly still in her high rocking-chair. Her arms hung passively at her sides, and her head leaned back and was turned to one side, as if she were utterly exhausted. But in the pale face, the closed eyes, and the blue shade about the parted lips, he saw that she was unconscious of his words. She had fainted.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO OLD MEN.

SHORTLY after Martha Deane left home for her eventful ride to Falconer's, the Doctor also mounted his horse and rode out of the village in the opposite direction. Two days before, he had been summoned to bleed "Old-man Barton," on account of a troublesome buzzing in the head, and, although not bidden to make a second professional visit, there was sufficient occasion for him to call upon his patient in the capacity of a neighbor.

Dr. Deane never made a step outside the usual routine of his business without a special and carefully considered reason. Various causes combined to inspire his movement in the present instance. The neighborhood was healthy; the village was so nearly deserted that no curious observers lounged upon the tavern-porch, or sat upon the horse-block at the corner-store; and Mr. Alfred Barton had been seen riding towards Avondale. There would have been safety in a much more unusual proceeding; this, therefore, might be undertaken in that secure, easy frame of mind which the Doctor both cultivated and recommended to the little world around him.

The Barton farm-house was not often molested by the presence of guests, and he found it as quiet and lifeless as an uninhabited island of the sea. Leaving his horse hitched in the shade of the corn-crib, he first came upon Giles, stretched out under the holly-bush, and fast asleep, with his head upon his jacket. The door and window of the family-room were open, and Dr. Deane, walking softly

upon the thick grass, saw that Old-man Barton was in his accustomed seat. His daughter Ann was not visible; she was at that moment occupied in taking out of the drawers of her queer old bureau, in her narrow bedroom up-stairs, various bits of lace and ribbon, done up in lavender, and perchance (for we must not be too curious) a broken sixpence or a lock of dead hair.

The old man's back was towards the window, but the Doctor could hear that papers were rustling and crackling in his trembling hands, and could see that an old casket of very solid oak, bound with iron, stood on the table at his elbow. Thereupon he stealthily retraced his steps to the gate, shut it with a sharp snap, cleared his throat, and mounted the porch with slow, loud, deliberate steps. When he reached the open door, he knocked upon the jamb without looking into the room. There was a jerking, dragging sound for a moment, and then the old man's snarl was heard:

"Who 's there?"

Dr. Deane entered, smiling, and redolent of sweet-majoram. "Well, Friend Barton," he said, "let's have a look at thee now!"

Thereupon he took a chair, placed it in front of the old man, and sat down upon it, with his legs spread wide apart, and his ivory-headed cane (which he also used as a riding-whip) bolt upright between them. He was very careful not to seem to see that a short quilt, which the old man usually wore over his knees, now lay in a somewhat angular heap upon the table.

"Better, I should say, — yes, decidedly better," he remarked, nodding his head gravely. "I had nothing to do this afternoon, — the neighborhood is very healthy, — and thought I would ride down and see how thee 's getting on. Only a friendly visit, thee knows."

The old man had laid one shaking arm and crooked hand upon the edge of the quilt, while with the other he

grasped his hickory staff. His face had a strange, ashy color, through which the dark, corded veins on his temples showed with singular distinctness. But his eye was unusually bright and keen, and its cunning, suspicious expression did not escape the Doctor's notice.

"A friendly visit — ay!" he growled — "not like Doctors' visits generally, eh? Better? — of course I'm better. It's no harm to tap one of a full-blooded breed. At our age, Doctor, a little blood goes a great way."

"No doubt, no doubt!" the Doctor assented. "Especially in thy case. I often speak of thy wonderful constitution."

"Neighborly, you say, Doctor — only neighborly?" asked the old man. The Doctor smiled, nodded, and seemed to exhale a more powerful herbaceous odor.

"Mayhap, then, you'll take a bit of a dram? — a thimble-full won't come amiss. You know the shelf where it's kep' — reach to, and help yourself, and then help me to a drop."

Dr. Deane rose and took down the square black bottle and the diminutive wine-glass beside it. Half-filling the latter, — a thimble-full in verity, — he drank it in two or three delicate little sips, puckering his large under-lip to receive them.

"It's right to have the best, Friend Barton," he said, "there's more life in it!" as he filled the glass to the brim and held it to the slit in the old man's face.

The latter eagerly drew off the top fulness, and then seized the glass in his shaky hand. "Can help myself," he croaked — "don't need waitin' on; not so bad as that!"

His color presently grew, and his neck assumed a partial steadiness. "What news, what news?" he asked. "You gather up a plenty in your goin's-around. It's little I get, except the bones, after they've been gnawed over by the whole neighborhood."

"There is not much now, I believe," Dr. Deane observed

"Jacob and Leah Gilpin have another boy, but thee hardly knows them, I think. William Byerly died last week in Birmingham; thee 's heard of him, — he had a wonderful gift of preaching. They say Maryland cattle will be cheap, this fall: does Alfred intend to fatten many? I saw him riding towards New-Garden."

"I guess he will," the old man answered, — "must make somethin' out o' the farm. That pastur'-bottom ought to bring more than it does."

"Alfred does n't look to want for much," the Doctor continued. "It 's a fine farm he has."

"Me, I say!" old Barton exclaimed, bringing down the end of his stick upon the floor. "The farm 's mine!"

"But it 's the same thing, is n't it?" asked Dr. Deane, in his cheeriest voice and with his pleasantest smile.

The old man looked at him for a moment, gave an incoherent grunt, the meaning of which the Doctor found it impossible to decipher, and presently, with a cunning leer, said, —

"Is all your property the same thing as your daughter's?"

"Well — well," replied the Doctor, softly rubbing his hands, "I should hope so — yes, I should hope so."

"Besides what she has in her own right?"

"Oh, thee knows that will be hers without my disposal. What I should do for her would be apart from that. I am not likely, at my time of life, to marry again — but we are led by the Spirit, thee knows; we cannot say, I will do thus and so, and these and such things shall happen, and those and such other shall not."

"Ay, that 's my rule, too, Doctor," said the old man, after a pause, during which he had intently watched his visitor, from under his wrinkled eyelids.

"I thought," the Doctor resumed, "thee was pretty safe against another marriage, at any rate, and thee had perhaps made up thy mind about providing for thy children."

It 's better for us old men to have our houses set in order that we may spare ourselves worry and anxiety of mind. Elisha is already established in his own independence, and I suppose Ann will give thee no particular trouble ; but if Alfred, now, should take a notion to marry, he could n't, thee sees, be expected to commit himself without having some idea of what thee intends to do for him."

Dr. Deane, having at last taken up his position and uncovered his front of attack, waited for the next movement of his adversary. He was even aware of a slight professional curiosity to know how far the old man's keen, shrewd, wary faculties had survived the wreck of his body.

The latter nodded his head, and pressed the top of his hickory stick against his gums several times, before he answered. He enjoyed the encounter, though not so sure of its issue as he would have been ten years earlier.

"I 'd do the fair thing, Doctor!" he finally exclaimed; "whatever it might be, it 'd be fair. Come, is n't that enough?"

"In a general sense, it is. But we are talking now as neighbors. We are both old men, Friend Barton, and I think we know how to keep our own counsel. Let us suppose a case—just to illustrate the matter, thee understands. Let us say that Friend Paxson—a widower, thee knows—had a daughter Mary, who had—well, a nice little penny in her own right,—and that thy son Alfred desired her in marriage. Friend Paxson, as a prudent father, knowing his daughter's portion, both what it is and what it will be,—he would naturally wish, in Mary's interest, to know that Alfred would not be dependent on her means, but that the children they might have would inherit equally from both. Now, it strikes me that Friend Paxson would only be right in asking thee what thee would do for thy son—nay, that, to be safe, he would want to see some evidence that would hold in law. Things are so uncertain, and a wise man guardeth his own household."

The old man laughed until his watery eyes twinkled. "Friend Paxson is a mighty close and cautious one to deal with," he said. "Mayhap he 'd like to manage to have me bound, and himself go free?"

"Thee 's mistaken, indeed!" Dr. Deane protested. "He's not that kind of a man. He only means to do what's right, and to ask the same security from thee, which thee — I'm sure of it, Friend Barton! — would expect *him* to furnish."

The old man began to find this illustration uncomfortable; it was altogether one-sided. Dr. Deane could shelter himself behind Friend Paxson and the imaginary daughter, but the applications came personally home to him. His old patience had been weakened by his isolation from the world, and his habits of arbitrary rule. He knew, moreover, the probable amount of Martha's fortune, and could make a shrewd guess at the Doctor's circumstances; but if the settlements were to be equal, each must give his share its highest valuation in order to secure more from the other. It was a difficult game, because these men viewed it in the light of a business transaction, and each considered that any advantage over the other would be equivalent to a pecuniary gain on his own part.

"No use beatin' about the bush, Doctor," the old man suddenly said. "You don't care for Paxson's daughter, that never was; why not put your Martha in her place. She has a good penny, I hear — five thousand, some say."

"Ten, every cent of it!" exclaimed Dr. Deane, very nearly thrown off his guard. "That is, she will have it, at twenty-five; and sooner, if she marries with my consent. But why does thee wish particularly to speak of her?"

"For the same reason you talk about Alfred. He has n't been about your house lately, I s'pose, hey?"

The Doctor smiled, dropping his eyelids in a very sagacious way. "He *does* seem drawn a little our way, I mus'

confess to thee," he said, "but we can't always tell how much is meant. Perhaps thee knows his mind better than I do?"

"Mayhap I do—know what it will be, if *I* choose. But I don't begrudge sayin' that he likes your girl, and I should n't wonder if he 'd showed it."

"Then thee sees, Friend Barton," Dr. Deane continued, "that the case is precisely like the one I supposed; and what I would consider right for Friend Paxson, would even be right for myself. I've no doubt thee could do more for Alfred than I can do for Martha, and without wrong to thy other children,—Elisha, as I said, being independent, and Ann not requiring a great deal,—and the two properties joined together would be a credit to us, and to the neighborhood. Only, thee knows, there must be some legal assurance beforehand. There is nothing certain,—even thy mind is liable to change,—ah, the mind of man is an unstable thing!"

The Doctor delivered these words in his most impressive manner, uplifting both eyes and hands.

The old man, however, seemed to pay but little attention to it. Turning his head on one side, he said, in a quick, sharp voice: "Time enough for that when we come to it. How's the girl inclined? Is the money hers, anyhow, at twenty-five,—how old now? Sure to be a couple, hey?—settle that first!"

Dr. Deane crossed his legs carefully, so as not to crease the cloth too much, laid his cane upon them, and leaned back a little in his chair. "Of course I've not spoken to Martha," he presently said; "I can only say that she has n't set her mind upon anybody else, and that is the main thing. She has followed my will in all, except as to joining the Friends, and there I felt that I could n't rightly command, where the Spirit had not spoken. Yes, the money will be hers at twenty-five,—she is twenty-one now,—but I hardly think it necessary to take that into

consideration. If thee can answer for Alfred, I think I can answer for her."

"The boy's close about *his* money," broke in the old man, with a sly, husky chuckle. "What he has, Doctor, you understand, goes toward balancin' what she has, afore you come onto me, at all. Yes, yes, I know what I'm about. A good deal, off and on, has been got out o' this farm, and it has n't all gone into *my* pockets. I've a trifle put out, but you can't expect me to strip myself naked, in my old days. But I'll do what's fair — I'll do what's fair!"

"There's only this," the Doctor added, meditatively, "and I want thee to understand, since we've, somehow or other, come to mention the matter, that we'd better have another talk, after we've had more time to think of it. Thee can make up thy mind, and let me know *about* what thee'll do; and I the same. Thee *has* a starting-point on my side, knowing the amount of Martha's fortune — *that*, of course, thee must come up to first, and then we'll see about the rest!"

Old-man Barton felt that he was here brought up to the rack. He recognized Dr. Deane's advantage, and could only evade it by accepting his proposition for delay. True, he had already gone over the subject, in his lonely, restless broodings beside the window, but this encounter had freshened and resuscitated many points. He knew that the business would be finally arranged, but nothing would have induced him to hasten it. There was a great luxury in this preliminary skirmishing.

"Well, well!" said he, "we need n't hurry. You're right there, Doctor. I s'pose you won't do anything to keep the young ones apart?"

"I think I've shown my own wishes very plainly, Friend Barton. It is necessary that Alfred should speak for himself, though, and after all we've said, perhaps it might be well if thee should give him a hint. Thee must re-

member that he has never yet mentioned the subject to me."

Dr. Deane thereupon arose, smoothed his garments, and shook out, not only sweet marjoram, but lavender, cloves, and calamus. His broad-brimmed drab hat had never left his head during the interview. There were steps on the creaking floor overhead, and the Doctor perceived that the private conference must now close. It was nearly a drawn game, so far; but the chance of advantage was on his side.

"Suppose I look at thy arm, — in a neighborly way, of course," he said, approaching the old man's chair.

"Never mind — took the bean off this mornin' — old blood, you know, but lively yet. Gad, Doctor! I've not felt so brisk for a year." His eyes twinkled so, under their puffy lids, the flabby folds in which his mouth terminated worked so curiously, — like those of a bellows, where they run together towards the nozzle, — and the two movable fingers on each hand opened and shut with such a menacing, clutching motion, that for one moment the Doctor felt a chill, uncanny creep run over his nerves.

"Brandy!" the old man commanded. "I've not talked so much at once't for months. You might take a little more, maybe. No? well, you hardly need it. Good brandy's powerful dear, these times."

Dr. Deane had too much tact to accept the grudging invitation. After the old man had drunk, he carefully replaced the bottle and glass on their accustomed shelf, and disposed himself to leave. On the whole, he was well satisfied with the afternoon's work, not doubting but that he had acted the part of a tender and most considerate parent towards his daughter.

Before they met, she also had disposed of her future, but in a very different way.

Miss Ann descended the stairs in time to greet the Doc-

tor before his departure. She would have gladly retained him to tea, as a little relief to the loneliness and weariness of the day ; but she never dared to give an invitation except when it seconded her father's, which, in the present case, was wanting.

CHAPTER XIV.

DOUBTS AND SURMISES.

GILBERT's voice, sharpened by his sudden and mortal fear, recalled Mary Potter to consciousness. After she had drunk of the cup of water which he brought, she looked slowly and wearily around the kitchen, as if some instinct taught her to fix her thoughts on the signs and appliances of her every-day life, rather than allow them to return to the pang which had overpowered her. Little by little she recovered her calmness and a portion of her strength, and at last, noticing her son's anxious face, she spoke.

"I have frightened you, Gilbert; but there is no occasion for it. I was n't rightly prepared for what you had to say — and — and — but, please, don't let us talk any more about it to-night. Give me a little time to think — if I *can* think. I'm afraid it's but a sad home I'm making for you, and sure it's a sad load I've put upon you, my poor boy! But oh, try, Gilbert, *try* to be patient a little while longer, — it can't be for long, — for I begin to see now that I've worked out my fault, and that the Lord in Heaven owes me justice!"

She clenched her hands wildly, and rose to her feet. Her steps tottered, and he sprang to her support.

"Mother," he said, "let me help you to your room. I'll not speak of this again; I would n't have spoken to-night, if I had mistrusted that it could give you trouble. Have no fear that I can ever be impatient again; patience is easy to me now!"

He spoke kindly and cheerfully, registering a vow in his

heart that his lips should henceforth be closed upon the painful theme, until his mother's release (whatever it was and whenever it might come) should open them.

But competent as he felt in that moment to bear the delay cheerfully, and determined as he was to cast no additional weight on his mother's heart, it was not so easy to compose his thoughts, as he lay in the dusky, starlit bed room up-stairs. The events of the day, and their recent consequences, had moved his strong nature to its very foundations. A chaos of joy, wonder, doubt, and dread surged through him. Over and over he recalled the sweet pressure of Martha Deane's lip, the warm curve of her bosom, the dainty, delicate firmness of her hand. Was this — could this possession really be his? In his mother's mysterious secret there lay an element of terror. He could not guess why the revelation of his fortunate love should agitate her so fearfully, unless — and the suspicion gave him a shock — her history were in some way involved with that of Martha Deane.

This thought haunted and perplexed him, continually returning to disturb the memory of those holy moments in the twilight dell, and to ruffle the bright current of joy which seemed to gather up and sweep away with it all the forces of his life. Any fate but to lose her, he said to himself; let the shadow fall anywhere, except between them! There would be other troubles, he foresaw, — the opposition of her father; the rage and hostility of Alfred Barton; possibly, when the story became known (as it must be in the end), the ill-will or aversion of the neighborhood. Against all these definite and positive evils, he felt strong and tolerably courageous, but the Something which evidently menaced him through his mother made him shrink with a sense of cowardice.

Hand in hand with this dread he went into the world of sleep. He stood upon the summit of the hill behind Falconer's farm-house, and saw Martha beckoning to him from

the hill on the other side of the valley. They stretched and clasped hands through the intervening space; the hills sank away, and they found themselves suddenly below, on the banks of the creek. He threw his arms around her, but she drew back, and then he saw that it was Betsy Lavender, who said: "I am your father—did you never guess it before?" Down the road came Dr. Deane and his mother, walking arm in arm; their eyes were fixed on him, but they did not speak. Then he heard Martha's voice, saying: "Gilbert, why did you tell Alfred Barton? Nobody must know that I am engaged to both of you." Betsy Lavender said: "He can only marry with my consent—Mary Potter has nothing to do with it." Martha then came towards him smiling, and said: "I will not send back your saddle-girth—see, I am wearing it as a belt!" He took hold of the buckle and drew her nearer; she began to weep, and they were suddenly standing side by side, in a dark room, before his dead mother, in her coffin.

This dream, absurd and incoherent as it was, made a strange impression upon Gilbert's mind. He was not superstitious, but in spite of himself the idea became rooted in his thoughts that the truth of his own parentage affected, in some way, some member of the Deane family. He taxed his memory in vain for words or incidents which might help him to solve this doubt. Something told him that his obligation to his mother involved the understanding that he would not even attempt to discover her secret; but he could not prevent his thoughts from wandering around it, and making blind guesses as to the vulnerable point.

Among these guesses came one which caused him to shudder; he called it impossible, incredible, and resolutely barred it from his mind. But with all his resolution, it only seemed to wait at a little distance, as if constantly seeking an opportunity to return. What if Dr. Deane were his own father? In that case Martha would be his

half-sister, and the stain of illegitimacy would rest on her, not on him ! There was ruin and despair in the supposition ; but, on the other hand, he asked himself why should the fact of his love throw his mother into a swoon ? Among the healthy, strong-nerved people of Kennett such a thing as a swoon was of the rarest occurrence, and it suggested some terrible cause to Gilbert's mind. It was sometimes hard for him to preserve his predetermined patient, cheerful demeanor in his mother's presence, but he tried bravely, and succeeded.

Although the harvest was well over, there was still much work to do on the farm, in order that the month of October might be appropriated to hauling, — the last time, Gilbert hoped, that he should be obliged to resort to this source of profit. Though the price of grain was sure to decline, on account of the extraordinary harvest, the quantity would make up for this deficiency. So far, his estimates had been verified. A good portion of the money was already on hand, and his coveted freedom from debt in the following spring became now tolerably secure. His course, in this respect, was in strict accordance with the cautious, plodding, conscientious habits of the community in which he lived. They were satisfied to advance steadily and slowly, never establishing a new mark until the old one had been reached.

Gilbert was impatient to see Martha again, not so much for the delight of love, as from a sense of the duty which he owed to her. His mother had not answered his question, — possibly not even heard it, — and he did not dare to approach her with it again. But so much as he knew might be revealed to the wife of his heart ; of that he was sure. If she could but share his confidence in his mother's words, and be equally patient to await the solution, it would give their relation a new sweetness, an added sanctity and trust.

He made an errand to Fairthorn's at the close of the

week, hoping that chance might befriend him, but almost determined, in any case, to force an interview. The dread he had trampled down still hung around him, and it seemed that Martha's presence might dissipate it. Something, at least, he might learn concerning Dr. Deane's family, and here his thoughts at once reverted to Miss Betsy Laverder. In her he had the true friend, the close mouth, the brain crammed with family intelligence !

The Fairthorns were glad to see their "boy," as the old woman still called him. Joe and Jake threw their brown legs over the barn-yard fence and clamored for a ride upon Roger. "Only along the level, t'other side o' the big hill, Gilbert !" said Joe, whereupon the two boys punched each other in the sides and nearly smothered with wicked laughter. Gilbert understood them ; he shook his head, and said : "You rascals, I think I see you doing that again !" But he turned away his face, to conceal a smile at the recollection.

It was, truly, a wicked trick. The boys had been in the habit of taking the farm-horses out of the field and riding them up and down the Unionville road. It was their habit, as soon as they had climbed "the big hill," to use stick and voice with great energy, force the animals into a gallop, and so dash along the level. Very soon, the horses knew what was expected of them, and whenever they came abreast of the great chestnut-tree on the top of the hill, they would start off as if possessed. If any business called Farmer Fairthorn to the Street Road, or up Marlborough way, Joe and Jake, dancing with delight, would dart around the barn, gain the wooded hollow, climb the big hill behind the lime-kiln, and hide themselves under the hedge, at the commencement of the level road. Here they could watch their father, as his benign, unsuspecting face came in sight, mounting the hill, either upon the gray mare, Bonnie, or the brown gelding, Peter. As the horse neared the chestnut-tree, they fairly shook with

eager expectancy — then came the start, the astonishment of the old man, his frantic “Whoa, there, whoa!” his hat soaring off on the wind, his short, stout body bouncing in the saddle, as, half-unseated, he clung with one hand to the mane and the other to the bridle! — while the wicked boys, after breathlessly watching him out of sight, rolled over and over on the grass, shrieking and yelling in a perfect luxury of fun.

Then they knew that a test would come, and prepared themselves to meet it. When, at dinner, Farmer Fairthorn turned to his wife and said: “Mammy,” (so he always addressed her) “I don’t know what’s the matter with Bonnie; why, she came nigh runnin’ off with me!” — Joe, being the oldest and boldest, would look up in well-affected surprise, and ask, “Why, how, Daddy?” while Jake would bend down his head and whimper, — “Somethin’'s got into my eye.” Yet the boys were very good-hearted fellows, at bottom, and we are sorry that we must chronicle so many things to their discredit.

Sally Fairthorn met Gilbert in her usual impetuous way. She was glad to see him, but she could not help saying: “Well, have you got your tongue yet, Gilbert? Why, you’re growing to be as queer as Dick’s hat-band! I don’t know any more where to find you, or how to place you; whatever is the matter?”

“Nothing, Sally,” he answered, with something of his old playfulness, “nothing except that the pears were very good. How’s Mark?”

“Mark!” she exclaimed with a very well assumed sneer, “As if I kept an account of Mark’s comings and goings!” But she could not prevent an extra color from rising into her face.

“I wish you did, Sally,” Gilbert gravely remarked. “Mark is a fine fellow, and one of my best friends, and he’d be all the better, if a smart, sensible girl like yourself would care a little for him.”

There was no answer to this, and Sally, with a hasty "I'll tell mother you're here!" darted into the house.

Gilbert was careful not to ask many questions during his visit; but Sally's rattling tongue supplied him with all he would have been likely to learn, in any case. She had found Martha at home the day before, and had talked about him, Gilbert. Martha had n't noticed anything "queer" in his manner, whereupon she, Sally, had said that Martha was growing "queer" too; then Martha remarked that — but here Sally found that she had been talking altogether too fast, so she bit her tongue and blushed a little. The most important piece of news, however, was that Miss Lavender was then staying at Dr. Deane's.

On his way to the village, Gilbert chose the readiest and simplest way of accomplishing his purpose. He would call on Betsy Lavender, and ask her to arrange her time so that she could visit his mother during his approaching absence from home. Leaving his horse at the hitching-post in front of the store, he walked boldly across the road and knocked at Dr. Deane's door.

The Doctor was absent. Martha and Miss Lavender were in the sitting-room, and a keen, sweet throb in his blood responded to the voice that bade him enter.

"Gilbert Potter, I'll be snaked!" exclaimed Miss Lavender, jumping up with a start that overturned her footstool.

"Well, Gilbert!" and "Well, Martha!" were the only words the lovers exchanged, on meeting, but their hands were quick to clasp and loath to loose. Martha Deane was too clear-headed to be often surprised by an impulse of the heart, but when the latter experience came to her, she never thought of doubting its justness. She had not been fully, vitally aware of her love for Gilbert until the day when he declared it, and now, in memory, the two circumstances seemed to make but one fact. The warmth, the beauty, the spiritual expansion which accompany love had

since then dawned upon her nature in their true significance. Proudly and cautiously as she would have guarded her secret from an intrusive eye, just as frank, tender, and brave was she to reveal every emotion of her heart to her lover. She was thoroughly penetrated with the conviction of his truth, of the integral nobility of his manhood; and these, she felt, were the qualities her heart had unconsciously craved. Her mind was made up inflexibly; it rejoiced in his companionship, it trusted in his fidelity, and if she considered conventional difficulties, it was only to estimate how they could most speedily be overthrown. Martha Deane was in advance of her age, — or, at least, of the community in which she lived.

They could only exchange common-places, of course, in Miss Lavender's presence; and perhaps they were not aware of the gentle, affectionate way in which they spoke of the weather and similar topics. Miss Lavender was; her eyes opened widely, then nearly closed with an expression of superhuman wisdom; she looked out of the window and nodded to the lilac-bush, then exclaiming in desperate awkwardness: "Goodness me, I must have a bit o' sage!" made for the garden, with long strides.

Gilbert was too innocent to suspect the artifice — not so Martha. But while she would have foiled the inference of any other woman, she accepted Betsy's without the least embarrassment, and took Gilbert's hand again in her own before the door had fairly closed.

"O Martha!" he cried, "if I could but see you oftener — but for a minute, every day! But there — I won't be impatient. I've thought of you ever since, and I ask myself, the first thing when I wake, morning after morning, is it really true?"

"And I say to myself, every morning, it *is* true," she answered. Her lovely blue eyes smiled upon him with a blissful consent, so gentle and so perfect, that he would fain have stood thus and spoken no word more.

"Martha," he said, returning to the thought of his duty, "I have something to say. You can hear it now. My mother declares that I am her lawful son, born in wedlock — she gave me her solemn word — but more than that she will not allow me to ask, saying she's bound for a time, and something, I don't know what, must happen before she can set herself right in the eyes of the world. I believe her, Martha, and I want that you should believe her, for her sake and for mine. I can't make things clear to you, now, because they're not clear to myself; only, what she has declared is and must be true! I am not base-born, and it'll be made manifest, I'm sure; the Lord will open her mouth in his own good time — and until then, we must wait! Will you wait with me?"

He spoke earnestly and hurriedly, and his communication was so unexpected that she scarcely comprehended its full import. But for his sake, she dared not hesitate to answer.

"Can you ask it, Gilbert? Whatever your mother declares to you, must be true; yet I scarcely understand it."

"Nor can I! I've wearied my brains, trying to guess why she can't speak, and what it is that'll give her the liberty at last. I dare n't ask her more — she fainted dead away, the last time."

"Strange things sometimes happen in this world," said Martha, with a grave tenderness, laying her hand upon his arm, "and this seems to be one of the strangest. I am glad you have told me, Gilbert, — it will make so much difference to you!"

"So it don't take you from me, Martha," he groaned, in a return of his terrible dread.

"Only Death can do that — and then but for a little while."

Here Miss Betsy Lavender made her appearance, but without the sage.

"How far a body can see, Martha," she exclaimed, "since

the big gum-tree's been cut down. It lays open the sight o' the road across the creek, and I seen your father ridin' down the hill, as plain as could be!"

"Betsy," said Gilbert, "I wanted to ask you about coming down our way."

"Our way. Did you? I see your horse hitched over at the store. I've an arrand, — sewin'-thread and pearl buttons, — and so I'll git my bonnet and you can tell me on the way."

The lovers said farewell, and Betsy Lavender accompanied Gilbert, proposing to walk a little way with him and get the articles on her return.

"Gilbert Potter," she said, when they were out of sight and ear-shot of the village, "I want you to know that I've got eyes in my head. I'm a safe body, as you can see, though it may n't seem the proper thing in me to say it, but all other folks is n't, so look out!"

"Betsy!" he exclaimed, "you seem to know everything about everybody — at least, you know what I am, perhaps better than I do myself; now suppose I grant you're right. what do you think of it?"

"Think of it? Go 'long! — you know what you want me to say, that there never was such a pair o' lovyers under the firmament! Let my deeds prove what I think, say I — for here's a case where deeds is wanted!"

"You can help me, Betsy — you can help me now! Do you know — can you guess — who was my father?"

"Good Lord!" was her surprised exclamation — "No, I don't, and that's the fact."

"Who was Martha Deane's mother?"

"A Blake — Naomi, one o the Birmingham Blakes, and a nice woman she was, too. I was at her weddin', and I helped nuss her when Martha was born."

"Had Dr. Deane been married before?"

"Married before? Well — no!" Here Miss Betsy seemed to be suddenly put upon her guard. "Not to that

extent, I should say. However, it's neither here nor there. Good lack, boy!" she cried, noticing a deadly paleness on Gilbert's face — "a-h-h-h, I begin to understand now. Look here, Gilbert! Git that nonsense out o' y'r head, jist as soon as *you* can. There 's enough o' trouble ahead, without borrowin' any more out o' y'r wanderin' wits. I don't deny but what I was holdin' back somethin', but it's another thing as ever was. I'll speak *you* clear o' your misdoubtin's, if that's y'r present bother. You don't feel quite as much like a live corpse, now, I reckon, hey?"

"O, Betsy!" he said. "if you knew how I have been perplexed, you would n't wonder at my fancies!"

"I can fancy all that, my boy," she gently answered, "and I'll tell you another thing, Gilbert — your mother has a heavy secret on her mind, and I rather guess it concerns your father. No — don't look so eager-like — I don't know it. All I do know is that you were born in Phildelphy."

"In Philadelphia! I never heard that."

"Well — it's neither here nor there. I've had my hands too full to spy out other people's affairs, but many a thing has come to me in a nateral way, or half-unbeknown. You can't do better than leave all sich wild guesses and misdoubtin's to me, that's better able to handle 'em. Not that I'm a-goin' to preach and declare anything until I know the rights of it, whatever and wherever. Well, as I was sayin' — for there 's Beulah Green comin' up the road, and you must git your usual face onto you, though Goodness knows, mine 's so crooked, I've often said nothin' short o' Death'll ever make much change in it — but never mind, I'll go down a few days to your mother, when you're off, though I don't promise to do much, except, maybe, cheer her up a bit; but we'll see, and so remember me to her, and good-bye!"

With these words and a sharp, bony wring of his hand, Miss Betsy strode rapidly back to the village. It did not

escape Gilbert's eye that, strongly as she had pronounced against his secret fear, the detection of it had agitated her. She had spoken hurriedly, and hastened away as if desiring to avoid further questions. He could not banish the suspicion that she knew something which might affect his fortune ; but she had not forbidden his love for Martha — she had promised to help him, and that was a great consolation. His cheerfulness, thenceforth, was not assumed, and he rejoiced to see a very faint, shadowy reflection of it, at times, in his mother's face.

CHAPTER XV.

ALFRED BARTON BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

FOR some days after Dr. Deane's visit, Old-man Barton was a continual source of astonishment to his son Alfred and his daughter Ann. The signs of gradual decay which one of them, at least, had watched with the keenest interest, had suddenly disappeared ; he was brighter, sharper, more talkative than at any time within the previous five years. The almost worn-out machinery of his life seemed to have been mysteriously repaired, whether by Dr. Deane's tinkering, or by one of those freaks of Nature which sometimes bring new teeth and hair to an aged head, neither the son nor the daughter could guess. To the former this awakened activity of the old man's brain was not a little annoying. He had been obliged to renew his note for the money borrowed to replace that which had been transferred to Sandy Flash, and in the mean time was concocting an ingenious device by which the loss should not entirely fall on his own half-share of the farm-profits. He could not have endured his father's tyranny without the delight of the cautious and wary revenges of this kind which he sometimes allowed himself to take.

Another circumstance, which gave him great uneasiness, was this : the old man endeavored in various ways, both direct and indirect, to obtain knowledge of the small investments which he had made from time to time. The most of these had been, through the agency of the old lawyer at Chester, consolidated into a first-class mortgage ; but it was Alfred's interest to keep his father in ignorance of the

other sums, not because of their importance, but because of their insignificance. He knew that the old man's declaration was true,—“The more you have, the more you'll get!”

The following Sunday, as he was shaving himself at the back kitchen-window, — Ann being up-stairs, at her threadbare toilet, — Old Barton, who had been silent during breakfast, suddenly addressed him :

“Well, boy, how stands the matter now?”

The son knew very well what was meant, but he thought it best to ask, with an air of indifference, —

“What matter, Daddy?”

“What matter, eh? The colt's lame leg, or the farrow o' the big sow? Gad, boy! don't you ever think about the gal, except when I put it into your head?”

“Oh, that!” exclaimed Alfred, with a smirk of well-assumed satisfaction — “that, indeed! Well, I think I may say, Daddy, that all 's right in that quarter.”

“Spoken to her yet?”

“N-no, not right out, that is; but since other folks have found out what I 'm after, I guess it 's plain enough to her. And a good sign is, that she plays a little shy.”

“Should n't wonder,” growled the old man. “Seems to me *you* play a little shy, too. Have to take it in my own hands, if it ever comes to anything.”

“Oh, it is n't at all necessary; I can do my own courting,” Alfred replied, as he wiped his razor and laid it away.

“Do it, then, boy, in short order! You're too old to stand in need o' much billin' and cooin' — but the gal 's rayther young, and may expect it — and I s'pose it 's the way. But I 'd sooner you 'd step up to the Doctor, bein' as I can only take him when he comes here to me loaded and primed. He 's mighty cute and sharp, but if you 've got any gumption, we 'll be even with him.”

Alfred turned around quickly and looked at his father.

“Ay, boy, I 've had one bout with him, last Sunday, and there 's more to come.”

“What was it?”

“Set yourself down on that cheer, and keep your head straight a bit, so that what goes into one ear, don’t fly out at the t’other.”

While Alfred, with a singular expression of curiosity and distrust, obeyed this command, the old man deliberated, for the last time, on the peculiar tactics to be adopted, so that his son should be made an ally, as against Dr. Deane, and yet be prevented from becoming a second foe, as against his own property. For it was very evident that while it was the father’s interest to exaggerate the son’s presumed wealth, it was the latter’s interest to underrate it. Thus a third element came into play, making this a triangular game of avarice. If Alfred could have understood his true position, he would have been more courageous; but his father had him at a decided advantage.

“Hark ye, boy!” said he, “I’ve waited e’en about long enough, and it’s time this thing was either a hit or a flash in the pan. The Doctor’s ready for’t; for all his cunnin’ he could n’t help lettin’ me see that; but he tries to cover both pockets with one hand while he stretches out the t’other. The gal’s money’s safe, ten thousand of it, and we’ve agreed that it’ll be share and share; only, your’n bein’ more than her’n, why, of course he must make up the difference.”

The son was far from being as shrewd as the father, or he would have instantly chosen the proper tack; but he was like a vessel caught in stays, and experienced considerable internal pitching and jostling. In one sense it was a relief that the old man supposed him to be worth much more than was actually the case, but long experience hinted that a favorable assumption of this kind often led to a damaging result. So with a wink and grin, the miserable hypocrisy of which was evident to his own mind, he said:

“Of course he must make up the difference, and more too! I know what’s fair and square.”

"Shut your mouth, boy, till I give you leave to open it. Do you hear? — the gal's ten thousand dollars must be put ag'inst the ten thousand you 've saved off the profits o' the farm; then, the rest you 've made bein' properly accounted for, he must come down with the same amount. Then, you must find out to a hair what he 's worth of his own — not that it concerns you, but *I* must know. What you 've got to do is about as much as you 've wits for. Now, open your mouth!"

"Ten thousand!" exclaimed Alfred, beginning to comprehend the matter more clearly; "why, it 's hardly quite ten thousand altogether, let alone anything over!"

"No lies, no lies! I 've got it all in my head, if you have n't. Twenty years on shares — first year, one hundred and thirty-seven dollars — that was the year the big flood swep' off half the corn on the bottom; second year, two hundred and fifteen, with interest on the first, say six on a hundred, allowin' the thirty-seven for your squanderin's, two hundred and twenty-one; third year, three hundred and five, with interest, seventeen, makes three hundred and twenty-two, and twenty, your half of the bay horse sold to Sam Falconer, forty-two; fourth year" —

"Never mind, Daddy!" Alfred interrupted; "I 've got it all down in my books; you need n't go over it."

The old man struck his hickory staff violently upon the floor. "*I will go over it!*" he croaked, hoarsely. "I mean to show you, boy, to your own eyes and your own ears, that you 're now worth thirteen thousand two hundred and forty-nine dollars and fifteen cents! And ten thousand of it balances the gal's ten thousand, leavin' three thousand two hundred and forty-nine and fifteen cents, for the Doctor to make up to *you!* And you 'll show him your papers, for you 're no son of mine if you 've put out your money without securin' it. I don't mind your goin' your own road with what you 've arned, though, for your proper good, you need n't ha' been so close; but now you 've

got to show what 's in your hand, if you mean to git it double!"

Alfred Barton was overwhelmed by the terrors of this unexpected dilemma. His superficial powers of dissimulation forsook him; he could only suggest, in a weak voice:

"Suppose my papers don't show that much?"

"You've made that, or nigh onto it, and your papers *must* show it! If money can't stick to your fingers, do you s'pose I'm goin' to put more into 'em? Fix it any way you like with the Doctor, so you square accounts. Then, afterwards, let him come to me — ay, let him come!"

Here the old man chuckled until he brought on a fit of coughing, which drove the dark purple blood into his head. His son hastened to restore him with a glass of brandy.

"There, that 'll do," he said, presently; "now you know what's what. Go up to the Doctor's this afternoon, and have it out before you come home. I can't dance at your weddin', but I would n't mind help nuss another grand-child or two — eh, boy?"

"Damme, and so you shall, Dad!" the son exclaimed, relapsing into his customary swagger, as the readiest means of flattering the old man's more amiable mood. It was an easier matter to encounter Dr. Deane — to procrastinate and prolong the settlement of terms, or shift the responsibility of the final result from his own shoulders. Of course the present command must be obeyed, and it was by no means an agreeable one; but Alfred Barton had courage enough for any emergency not yet arrived. So he began to talk and joke very comfortably about his possible marriage, until Ann, descending to the kitchen in her solemn black gown, interrupted the conference.

That afternoon, as Alfred took his way by the foot-path to the village, he seated himself in the shade, on one end of the log which spanned the creek, in order to examine his position, before venturing on a further step. We will not probe the depths of his meditations; probably they

were not very deep, even when most serious ; but we may readily conjecture those considerations which were chiefly obvious to his mind. The affair, which he had so long delayed, through a powerful and perhaps a natural dread, was now brought to a crisis. He could not retreat without extreme risk to his prospects of inheritance ; since his father and Dr. Deane had come to an actual conference, he was forced to assume the part which was appropriate to him. Sentiment, he was aware, would not be exacted, but a certain amount of masculine anticipation belonged to his character of lover ; should he assume this, also, or meet Dr. Deane on a hard business ground ?

It is a matter of doubt whether any vulgar man suspects the full extent of his vulgarity ; but there are few who are not conscious, now and then, of a very uncomfortable difference between themselves and the refined natures with whom they come in contact. Alfred Barton had never been so troubled by this consciousness as when in the presence of Martha Deane. He was afraid of her ; he foresaw that she, as his wife, would place him in a more painful subjection than that which his father now enforced. He was weary of bondage, and longed to draw a free, unworried breath. With all his swagger, his life had not always been easy or agreeable. A year or two more might see him, in fact and in truth, his own master. He was fifty years old ; his habits of life were fixed ; he would have shrunk from the semi-servitude of marriage, though with a woman after his own heart, and there was nothing in this (except the money) to attract him.

"I see no way !" he suddenly exclaimed, after a fit of long and unsatisfactory musing.

"Nor I neither, unless you make room for me !" answered a shrill voice at his side.

He started as if shot, becoming aware of Miss Betsy Lavelander, who had just emerged from the thicket.

"Skeered ye, have I ?" said she. "Why, how you do

color up, to be sure! I never was that red, even in my blushin' days; but never mind, what's said to nobody is nobody's business."

He laughed a forced laugh. "I was thinking, Miss Betsy," he said, "how to get the grain threshed and sent to the mills before prices come down. Which way are you going?"

She had been observing him through half-closed eyes, with her head a little thrown back. First slightly nodding to herself, as if assenting to some mental remark, she asked, —

"Which way are *you* goin'? For my part I rather think we're changin' places, — me to see Miss Ann, and you to see Miss Martha."

"You're wrong!" he exclaimed. "I was only going to make a little neighborly call on the Doctor."

"On the Doctor! Ah-ha! it's come to that, has it? Well, I won't be in the way."

"Confound the witch!" he muttered to himself, as she sprang upon the log and hurried over.

Mr. Alfred Barton was not acquainted with the Greek drama, or he would have had a very real sense of what is meant by Fate. As it was, he submitted to circumstances, climbed the hill, and never halted until he found himself in Dr. Deane's sitting-room.

Of course, the Doctor was alone and unoccupied; it always happens so. Moreover he knew, and Alfred Barton knew that he knew, the subject to be discussed; but it was not the custom of the neighborhood to approach an important interest except in a very gradual and roundabout manner. Therefore the Doctor said, after the first greeting, —

"Thee'll be getting thy crops to market soon, I imagine?"

"I'd like to," Barton replied, "but there's not force enough on our place, and the threshers are wanted every-

where at once. What would you do, — hurry off the grain now, or wait to see how it may stand in the spring ? ”

Dr. Deane meditated a moment, and then answered with great deliberation : “ I never like to advise, where the chances are about even. It depends, thee knows, on the prospect of next year’s crops. But, which ever way thee decides, it will make less difference to thee than to them that depend altogether upon their yearly earnings.”

Barton understood this stealthy approach to the important subject, and met it in the same way. “ I don’t know,” he said ; “ it’s slow saving on half-profits. I have to look mighty close, to make anything decent.”

“ Well,” said the Doctor, “ what is n’t laid up *by* thee is laid up *for* thee, I should judge.”

“ I should hope so, Doctor ; but I guess you know the old man as well as I do. If anybody could tell what’s in his mind, it’s Lawyer Stacy, and he’s as close as a steel-trap. I’ve hardly had a fair chance, and it ought to be made up to me.”

“ It will be, no doubt.” And then the Doctor, resting his chin upon his cane, relapsed into a grave, silent, expectant mood, which his guest well understood.

“ Doctor,” he said at last, with an awkward attempt at a gay, confidential manner, “ you know what I come for to-day. Perhaps I’m rather an old boy to be here on such an errand ; I’ve been a bit afraid lest you might think me so ; and for that reason I hav n’t spoken to Martha at all, (though I think she’s smart enough to guess how my mind turns,) and won’t speak, till I first have your leave. I’m not so young as to be light-headed in such matters ; and, most likely, I’m not everything that Martha would like ; but — but — there’s other things to be considered — not that I mind ’em much, only the old man, you know, is very particular about ’em, and so I’ve come up to see if we can’t agree without much trouble.”

Dr. Deane took a small pinch of Rappee, and then

touched his nose lightly with his lavendered handkerchief. He drew up his hanging under-lip until it nearly covered the upper, and lifted his nostrils with an air at once of reticence and wisdom. "I don't deny," he said slowly "that I've suspected something of what is in thy mind and I will further say that thee's done right in coming first to me. Martha being an only d—child, I have her welfare much at heart, and if I had known anything seriously to thy discredit, I would not have permitted thy attentions. So far as that goes, thee may feel easy. I *do* hope, however, that thee would have some assurance of what thy father intends to do for thee — and perhaps thee has, — Elisha being established in his own independence, and Ann not requiring a great deal, thee would inherit considerable, besides the farm. And it seems to me that I might justly, in Martha's interest, ask for some such assurance."

If Alfred Barton's secret thought had been expressed in words, it would have been: "Curse the old fool — he knows what the old man is, as well as I do!" But he twisted a respectful hypocrisy out of his whisker, and said, —

"Ye-e-es, that seems only fair. How am *I* to get at it, though? I dare n't touch the subject with a ten-foot pole, and yet it stands both to law and reason that I should come in for a handsome slice o' the property. You might take it for granted, Doctor?"

"So I might, if *thy* father would take for granted what *I* might be able to do. I can see, however, that it's hardly *thy* place to ask him; that might be left to me."

This was an idea which had not occurred to Alfred Barton. A thrill of greedy curiosity shot through his heart; he saw that, with Dr. Deane's help, he might be able to ascertain the amount of the inheritance which must so soon fall to him. This feeling, fed by the impatience of his long subjection, took complete possession of him. and

he resolved to further his father's desires, without regard to present results.

"Yes, that might be left to me," the Doctor repeated, "after the other matter is settled. Thee knows what I mean. Martha will have ten thousand dollars in her own right, at twenty-five, — and sooner, if she marries with my approbation. Now, thee or thy father must bring an equal sum; that is understood between us — and I think thy father mentioned that thee could do it without calling upon him. Is that the case?"

"Not quite — but, yes, very nearly. That is, the old man's been so close with me, that I'm a little close with him, Doctor, you see! He does n't know exactly how much I have got, and as he threatens to leave me according to what I've saved, why, I rather let him have his own way about the matter."

A keen, shrewd smile flitted over the Doctor's face.

"But if it is n't quite altogether ten thousand, Doctor," Barton continued, "I don't say but what it could be easily made up to that figure. You and I could arrange all that between our two selves, without consulting the old man — and, indeed, it's not *his* business, in any way, — and so, you might go straight to the other matter at once."

"H'm," mused the Doctor, with his chin again upon his stick, "I should perhaps be working in thy interest, as much as in mine. Then thee can afford to come up fair and square to the mark. Of course, thee has all the papers to show for thy own property?"

"I guess there'll be no trouble about that," Barton answered, carelessly. "I lend on none but the best security. 'T will take a little time — must go to Chester — so we need n't wait for that; 't will be all right!"

"Oh, no doubt; but has n't thee overlooked one thing?"

"What?"

"That Martha should first know thy mind towards her."

It was true; he had overlooked that important fact, and the suggestion came to him very like an attack of cramp. He laughed, however, took out a red silk handkerchief, and tried to wipe a little eagerness into his face.

"No, Doctor!" he exclaimed, "not forgot, only keeping the best for the last. I was n't sure but you might want to speak to her yourself, first; but she knows, does n't she?"

"Not to my direct knowledge; and I would n't like to venture to speak in her name."

"Then, I'll — that is, you think I'd better have a talk with her. A little tough, at my time of life, ha! ha! — but faint heart never won fair lady; and I had n't thought of going that far to-day, though of course, I'm anxious, — been in my thoughts so long, — and perhaps — perhaps" —

"I'll tell thee," said the Doctor, seeming not to notice Barton's visible embarrassment, which he found very natural; "do thee come up again next First-day afternoon, prepared to speak thy mind. I will give Martha a hint of thy purpose beforehand, but only a hint, mind thee; the girl has a smart head of her own, and thee'll come on faster with her if thee pleads thy own cause with thy own mouth."

"Yes, I'll come then!" cried Barton, so relieved at his present escape that his relief took the expression of joy. Dr. Deane was a fair judge of character; he knew all of Alfred Barton's prominent traits, and imagined that he was now reading him like an open book; but it was like reading one of those Latin sentences which, to the ear, are made up of English words. The signs were all correct, only they belonged to another language.

The heavy wooer shortly took his departure. While on the return path, he caught sight of Miss Betsy Lavender's beaver, bobbing along behind the pickets of the hill-fence, and, rather than encounter its wearer in his present mood, he stole into the shelter of one of the cross-hedges, and made his way into the timbered bottom below.

CHAPTER XVI

MARTHA DEANE.

LITTLE did Dr. Deane suspect the nature of the conversation which had that morning been held in his daughter's room, between herself and Betsy Lavender.

When the latter returned from her interview with Gilbert Potter, the previous evening, she found the Doctor already arrived. Mark came home at supper-time, and the evening was so prolonged by his rattling tongue that no room was left for any confidential talk with Martha, although Miss Betsy felt that something ought to be said, and it properly fell to her lot to broach the delicate subject.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, therefore, she slipped up to Martha's room, on the transparent pretence of looking again at a new dress, which had been bought some days before. She held the stuff to the light, turned it this way and that, and regarded it with an importance altogether out of proportion to its value.

"It seems as if I could n't git the color rightly set in my head," she remarked; "'t a'n't quiet laylock, nor yit vi'let, and there ought, by rights, to be quilled ribbon round the neck, though the Doctor might consider it too gay; but never mind, he'd dress you in drab or slate if he could, and I dunno, after all" —

"Betsy!" exclaimed Martha, with an impetuosity quite unusual to her calm nature, "throw down the dress! Why won't you speak of what is in your mind; don't you see I'm waiting for it?"

"You're right, child!" Miss Betsy cried, flinging the stuff to the farthest corner of the room; "I'm an awkward old fool, with all my exper'ence. Of course I seen it with half a wink; there! don't be so trembly now. I know how you feel, Martha; you would n't think it, but I do. I can tell the real signs from the passin' fancies, and if ever I see true-love in my born days, I see it in you, child, and in *him*."

Martha's face glowed in spite of herself. The recollection of Gilbert's embrace in the dusky glen came to her, already for the thousandth time, but warmer, sweeter at each recurrence. She felt that her hand trembled in that of the spinster, as they sat knee to knee, and that a tender dew was creeping into her eyes; leaning forward, she laid her face a moment on her friend's shoulder, and whispered, —

"It is all very new and strange, Betsy; but I am happy."

Miss Lavender did not answer immediately. With her hand on Martha's soft, smooth hair, she was occupied in twisting her arm so that the sleeve might catch and conceal two troublesome tears which were at that moment trickling down her nose. Besides, she was not at all sure of her voice, until something like a dry crust of bread in her throat had been forcibly swallowed down.

Martha, however, presently lifted her head with a firm, courageous expression, though the rosy flush still suffused her cheeks. "I'm not as independent as people think," she said, "for I could n't help myself when the time came, and I seem to belong to him, ever since."

"Ever since. Of course you do!" remarked Miss Betsy, with her head down and her hands busy at her high comb and thin twist of hair; "every woman, savin' and exceptin' myself, and no fault o' mine, must play Jill to somebody's Jack; it's man's way and the Lord's way, but worked out with a mighty variety, though I say it, but why not, my eyes bein' as good as anybody else's! Come now, you're

lookin' again after your own brave fashion ; and so, you're sure o' your heart, Martha ? ”

“ Betsy, my heart speaks once and for all,” said Martha, with kindling eyes.

“ Once and for all. I knowed it — and so the Lord help us ! For here I smell wagon-loads o' trouble ; and if you were n't a girl to know her own mind and stick to it, come weal, come woe, and he with a bull-dog's jaw that'll never let go, and I mean no runnin' of him down, but on the contrary, quite the reverse, I'd say to both, git over it somehow for it won't be, and no matter if no use, it's my dooty, — well, it's t'other way, and I've got to give a lift where I can, and pull this way, and shove that way, and hold back everybody, maybe, and fit things to things, and unfit other things, — Good Lord, child, you've made an awful job for *me* ! ”

Therewith Miss Betsy laughed, with a dry, crisp, cheerfulness which quite covered up and concealed her forebodings. Nothing pleased her better than to see realized in life her own views of what ought to be, and the possibility of becoming one of the shaping and regulating powers to that end stirred her nature to its highest and most joyous activity.

Martha Deane, equally brave, was more sanguine. The joy of her expanding love foretold its fulfilment to her heart. “ I know, Betsy,” she said, “ that father would not hear of it now ; but we are both young and can wait, at least until I come into my property — *ours*, I ought to say, for I think of it already as being as much Gilbert's as mine. What other trouble can there be ? ”

“ Is there none on his side, Martha ? ”

“ His birth ? Yes, there is — or was, though not to me — never to me ! I am so glad, for his sake, — but, Betsy, perhaps you do not know ” —

“ If there's anything I need to know, I'll find it out, soon or late. He's worried, that I see, and no wonder

poor boy! But as you say, there's time enough, and my single and solitary advice to both o' you, is, don't look at one another before folks, if you can't keep your eyes from blabbin'. Not a soul suspicions anything now, and if you two 'll only fix it betwixt and between you to keep quiet, and patient, and as forbearin' in showin' feelin' as people that hate each other like snakes, why, who knows but somethin' may turn up, all unexpected, to make the way as smooth for ye as a pitch-pine plank!"

"Patient!" Martha murmured to herself. A bright smile broke over her face, as she thought how sweet it would be to match, as best a woman might, Gilbert's incomparable patience and energy of purpose. The tender humility of her love, so beautifully interwoven with the texture of its pride and courage, filled her heart with a balmy softness and peace. She was already prepared to lay her firm, independent spirit at his feet, or exercise it only as her new, eternal duty to him might require. Betsy Lavender's warning could not ripple the bright surface of her happiness; she knew that no one (hardly even Gilbert, as yet) suspected that in her heart the love of a strong and faithful and noble man outweighed all other gifts or consequences of life — that, to keep it, she would give up home, friends, father, the conventional respect of every one she knew!

"Well, child!" exclaimed Miss Lavender, after a long lapse of silence; "the words is said that can't be taken back, accordin' to *my* views o' things, though, Goodness knows, there's enough and enough thinks different, and you must abide by 'em; and what I think of it all I'll tell you when the end comes, not before, so don't ask me now; but one thing more, there's another sort of a gust brewin', and goin' to break soon, if ever, and that is, Alf. Barton, — though you won't believe it, — he's after you in his stupid way, and your father favors him. And my advice is, hold him off as much as you please, but say nothin' o' Gilbert!"

This warning made no particular impression upon Martha. She playfully tapped Miss Betsy's high comb, and said: "Now, if you are going to be so much worried about me, I shall be sorry that you found it out."

"Well I won't! — and now let me hook your gown."

Often, after that, however, did Martha detect Miss Betsy's eyes fixed upon her with a look of wistful, tender interest, and she knew, though the spinster would not say it, that the latter was alive with sympathy, and happy in the new confidence between them. With each day, her own passion grew and deepened, until it seemed that the true knowledge of love came after its confession. A sweet, warm yearning for Gilbert's presence took its permanent seat in her heart; not only his sterling manly qualities, but his form, his face — the broad, square brow; the large, sad, deep-set gray eyes; the firm, yet impassioned lips — haunted her fancy. Slowly and almost unconsciously as her affection had been developed, it now took the full stature and wore the radiant form of her maiden dream of love.

If Dr. Deane noticed the physical bloom and grace which those days brought to his daughter, he was utterly innocent of the true cause. Perhaps he imagined that his own eyes were first fairly opened to her beauty by the prospect of soon losing her. Certainly she had never seemed more obedient and attractive. He had not forgotten his promise to Alfred Barton; but no very convenient opportunity for speaking to her on the subject occurred until the following Sunday morning. Mark was not at home, and he rode with her to Old Kennett Meeting.

As they reached the top of the long hill beyond the creek, Martha reined in her horse to enjoy the pleasant westward view over the fair September landscape. The few houses of the village crowned the opposite hill; but on this side the winding, wooded vale meandered away, to lose itself among the swelling slopes of clover and stubble-field;

and beyond, over the blue level of Tuffkenamon, the oak woods of Avondale slept on the horizon. It was a landscape such as one may see, in a more cultured form, on the road from Warwick to Stratford. Every one in Kennett enjoyed the view, but none so much as Martha Deane, upon whom its harmonious, pastoral aspect exercised an indescribable charm.

To the left, on the knoll below, rose the chimneys of the Barton farm-house, over the round tops of the apple-trees, and in the nearest field Mr. Alfred's Maryland cattle were fattening on the second growth of clover.

"A nice place, Martha!" said Dr. Deane, with a wave of his arm, and a whiff of sweet herbs.

"Here, in this first field, is the true place for the house," she answered, thinking only of the landscape beauty of the farm.

"Does thee mean so?" the Doctor eagerly asked, deliberating with himself how much of his plan it was safe to reveal. "Thee may be right, and perhaps thee might bring Alfred to thy way of thinking."

She laughed. "It's hardly worth the trouble."

"I've noticed, of late," her father continued, "that Alfred seems to set a good deal of store by thee. He visits us pretty often."

"Why, father!" she exclaimed, as they rode onward, "it's rather *thee* that attracts him, and cattle, and crops, and the plans for catching Sandy Flash! He looks frightened whenever I speak to him."

"A little nervous, perhaps. Young men are often so, in the company of young women, I've observed."

Martha laughed so cheerily that her father said to himself: "Well, it does n't displease her, at any rate." On the other hand, it was possible that she might have failed to see Barton in the light of a wooer, and therefore a further hint would be required.

"Now that we happen to speak of him, Martha," he said,

"I might as well tell thee that, in my judgment, he seems to be drawn towards thee in the way of marriage. He may be a little awkward in showing it, but that 's a common case. When he was at our house, last First-day, he spoke of thee frequently, and said that he would like to — well, to see thee soon. I believe he intends coming up this afternoon."

Martha became grave, as Betsy Lavender's warning took so suddenly a positive form. However, she had thought of this contingency as a possible thing, and must prepare herself to meet it with firmness.

"What does thee say?" the Doctor asked, after waiting a few minutes for an answer.

"Father, I hope thee 's mistaken. Alfred Barton is not overstocked with wit, I know, but he can hardly be that foolish. He is almost as old as thee."

She spoke quietly, but with that tone of decision which Dr. Deane so well knew. He set his teeth and drew up his under-lip to a grim pout. If there was to be resistance, he thought, she would not find him so yielding as on other points; but he would first try a middle course.

"Understand me, Martha," he said; "I do not mean to declare what Alfred Barton's sentiments really are, but what, in my judgment, they *might* be. And thee had better wait and learn, before setting thy mind either for or against him. It 's hardly putting much value upon thyself, to call him foolish."

"It is a humiliation to me, if thee is right, father," she said.

"I don't see that. Many young women would be proud of it. I 'll only say one thing, Martha; if he seeks thee, and *does* speak his mind, do thee treat him kindly and respectfully."

"Have I ever treated thy friends otherwise?" she asked

"My friends! thee 's right — he *is* my friend."

She made no reply, but her soul was already coura

geously arming itself for battle. Her father's face was stern and cold, and she saw, at once, that he was on the side of the enemy. This struggle safely over, there would come another and a severer one. It was well that she had given herself time, setting the fulfilment of her love so far in advance.

Nothing more was said on this theme, either during the ride to Old Kennett, or on the return. Martha's plan was very simple: she would quietly wait until Alfred Barton should declare his sentiments, and then reject him once and forever. She would speak clearly, and finally; there should be no possibility of misconception. It was not a pleasant task; none but a vain and heartless woman would be eager to assume it; and Martha Deane hoped that it might be spared her.

But she, no less than her irresolute lover, (if we can apply that word to Alfred Barton,) was an instrument in the hands of an uncomfortable Fate. Soon after dinner a hesitating knock was heard at the door, and Barton entered with a more uneasy air than ever before. Erelong, Dr Deane affected to have an engagement with an invalid on the New-Garden road; Betsy Lavender had gone to Fairthorn's for the afternoon, and the two were alone.

For a few moments, Martha was tempted to follow her father's example, and leave Alfred Barton to his own devices. Then she reflected that this was a cowardly feeling; it would only postpone her task. He had taken his seat, as usual, in the very centre of the room; so she came forward and seated herself at the front window, with her back to the light, thus, woman-like, giving herself all the advantages of position.

Having his large, heavy face before her, in full light, she was at first a little surprised on finding that it expressed not even the fond anxiety, much less the eagerness, of an aspiring wooer. The hair and whiskers, it is true, were so smoothly combed back that they made long lappets on

either side of his face : unusual care had been taken with his cambric cravat and shirt-ruffles, and he wore his best blue coat, which was entirely too warm for the season. In strong contrast to this external preparation, were his restless eyes which darted hither and thither in avoidance of her gaze, the fidgety movements of his thick fingers, creeping around buttons and in and out of button-holes, and finally the silly, embarrassed half-smile which now and then came to his mouth, and made the platitudes of his speech almost idiotic.

Martha Deane felt her courage rise as she contemplated this picture. In spite of the disgust which his gross physical appearance, and the contempt which his awkward helplessness inspired, she was conscious of a lurking sense of amusement. Even a curiosity, which we cannot reprehend, to know by what steps and in what manner he would come to the declaration, began to steal into her mind, now that it was evident her answer could not possibly wound any other feeling than vanity.

In this mood, she left the burden of the conversation to him. He might flounder, or be completely stalled, as often as he pleased ; it was no part of her business to help him.

In about three minutes after she had taken her seat by the window, he remarked, with a convulsive smile, —

“ Apples are going to be good, this year.”

“ Are they ? ” she said.

“ Yes ; do you like 'em ? Most girls do.”

“ I believe I do, — except Russets,” Martha replied, with her hands clasped in her lap, and her eyes full upon his face.

He twisted the smoothness out of one whisker, very much disconcerted at her remark, because he could not tell — he never could, when speaking with her — whether or not she was making fun of him. But he could think of nothing to say, except his own preferences in the matter of

apples. — a theme which he pursued until Martha was very tired of it.

He next asked after Mark Deane, expressing at great length his favorable opinion of the young carpenter, and relating what pains he had taken to procure for him the building of Hallowell's barn. But to each observation Martha made the briefest possible replies, so that in a short time he was forced to start another topic.

Nearly an hour had passed, and Martha's sense of the humorous had long since vanished under the dreary monotony of the conversation, when Alfred Barton seemed to have come to a desperate resolution to end his embarrassment. Grasping his knees with both hands, and dropping his head forward so that the arrows of her eyes might glance from his fat forehead, he said. —

"I suppose you know why I come here to-day, Miss Martha?"

All her powers were awake and alert in a moment. She scrutinized his face keenly, and, although his eyes were hidden, there were lines enough visible, especially about the mouth, to show that the bitter predominated over the sweet in his emotions.

"To see my father, was n't it? I'm sorry he was obliged to leave home," she answered.

"No, Miss Martha, I come to see you. I have some thing to say to you, and I'm sure you know what I mean by this time, don't you?"

"No. How should I?" she coolly replied. It was not true; but the truest-hearted woman that ever lived could have given no other answer.

Alfred Barton felt the sensation of a groan pass through him, and it very nearly came out of his mouth. Then he pushed on, in a last wild effort to perform the remainder of his exacted task in one piece:

"I want you to be — to be — my — wife! That is, my father and yours are agreed about it, and they think I ought

to speak to you. I'm a good deal older, and — and perhaps you might n't fancy me in all things, but they say it'll make little difference; and if you have n't thought about it much, why, there's no hurry as to making up your mind. I've told you now, and to be sure you ought to know, while the old folks are trying to arrange property matters, and it's my place, like, to speak to you first."

Here he paused; his face was very red, and the perspiration was oozing in great drops from every pore. He drew forth the huge red silk handkerchief, and mopped his cheeks, his nose, and his forehead; then lifted his head and stole a quick glance at Martha. Something in his face puzzled her, and yet a sudden presentiment of his true state of feeling flashed across her mind. She still sat, looking steadily at him, and for a few moments did not speak.

"Well?" he stammered.

"Alfred Barton," she said, "I must ask you one question, do you love me?"

He seemed to feel a sharp sting. The muscles of his mouth twitched; he bit his lip, sank his head again, and murmured, —

"Y-yes."

"He does not," she said to herself. "I am spared this humiliation. It is a mean, low nature, and fears mine — fears, and would soon hate. He shall not see even so much of me as would be revealed by a frank, respectful rejection. I must punish him a little for the deceit, and I now see how to do it."

While these thoughts passed rapidly through her brain, she waited until he should again venture to meet her eye. When he lifted his head, she exclaimed, —

"You have told an untruth! Don't turn your head away; look me in the face, and hear me tell you that you do not love me — that you have not come to me of your own desire, and that you would rather ten thousand times

I should say No, if it were not for a little property of mine. But suppose I, too, were of a similar nature; suppose I cared not for what is called love, but only for money and lands such as you will inherit; suppose I found the plans of my father and your father very shrewd and reasonable, and were disposed to enter into them — what then?"

Alfred Barton was surprised out of the last remnant of his hypocrisy. His face, so red up to this moment, suddenly became sallow; his chin dropped, and an expression of amazement and fright came into the eyes fixed on Martha's.

The game she was playing assumed a deeper interest; here was something which she could not yet fathom. She saw what influence had driven him to her, against his inclination, but his motive for seeming to obey, while dreading success, was a puzzle. Singularly enough, a slight feeling of commiseration began to soften her previous contempt, and hastened her final answer.

"I see that these suppositions would not please you," she said, "and thank you for the fact. Your face is more candid than your speech. I am now ready to say, Alfred Barton, — because I am sure the knowledge will be agreeable to you, — that no lands, no money, no command of my father, no degree of want, or misery, or disgrace, could ever make me your wife!"

She had risen from her chair while speaking, and he also started to his feet. Her words, though such an astounding relief in one sense, had nevertheless given him pain; there was a sting in them which cruelly galled his self-conceit. It was enough to be rejected; she need not have put an eternal gulf between their natures.

"Well," said he, sliding the rim of his beaver backwards and forwards between his fingers, "I suppose I'll have to be going. You're very plain-spoken, as I might have known. I doubt whether we two would make a good team, and no offence to you, Miss Martha. Only, it'll be a mor-

tal disappointment to the old man, and — look here, it a'n't worth while to say anything about it, is it?"

Alfred Barton was strongly tempted to betray the secret reason which Martha had not yet discovered. After the strong words he had taken from her, she owed him a kindness, he thought; if she would only allow the impression that the matter was still undecided — that more time (which a coy young maiden might reasonably demand) had been granted! On the other hand, he feared that her clear, firm integrity of character would be repelled by the nature of his motive. He was beginning to feel, greatly to his own surprise, a profound respect for her.

"If my father questions me about your visit," she said, "I shall tell him simply that I have declined your offer. No one else is likely to ask me."

"I don't deny," he continued, still lingering near the door, "that I've been urged by my father — yours, too, for that matter — to make the offer. But I don't want you to think hard of me. I've not had an easy time of it, and if you knew everything, you'd see that a good deal is n't rightly to be laid to my account."

He spoke sadly, and so genuine a stamp of unhappiness was impressed upon his face, that Martha's feeling of commiseration rose to the surface.

"You'll speak to me, when we happen to meet?" he said.

"If I did not," she answered, "every one would suspect that something had occurred. That would be unpleasant for both of us. Do not think that I shall bear malice against you; on the contrary, I wish you well."

He stooped, kissed her hand, and then swiftly, silently and with averted head, left the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONSULTATIONS.

WHEN Dr. Deane returned home, in season for supper, he found Martha and Betsy Lavender employed about their little household matters. The former showed no lack of cheerfulness or composure, nor, on the other hand, any such nervous unrest as would be natural to a maiden whose hand had just been asked in marriage. The Doctor could not at all guess, from her demeanor, whether anything had happened during his absence. That Alfred Barton had not remained was rather an unfavorable circumstance; but then, possibly, he had not found courage to speak. All things being considered, it seemed best that he should say nothing to Martha, until he had had another interview with his prospective son-in-law.

At this time Gilbert Potter, in ignorance of the cunning plans which were laid by the old men, was working early and late to accomplish all necessary farm-labor by the first of October. That month he had resolved to devote to the road between Columbia and Newport, and if but average success attended his hauling, the earnings of six round trips, with the result of his bountiful harvest, would at last place in his hands the sum necessary to defray the remaining debt upon the farm. His next year's wheat-crop was already sowed, the seed-clover cut, and the fortnight which still intervened was to be devoted to threshing. In this emergency, as at reaping-time, when it was difficult to obtain extra hands, he depended on Deb. Smith, and she did not fail him.

Her principal home, when she was not employed on farm-work, was a log-hut, on the edge of a wood, belonging to the next farm north of Fairthorn's. This farm—the "Woodrow property," as it was called—had been stripped of its stock and otherwise pillaged by the British troops, (Howe and Cornwallis having had their headquarters at Kennett Square), the day previous to the Battle of Brandywine, and the proprietor had never since recovered from his losses. The place presented a ruined and desolated appearance, and Deb. Smith, for that reason perhaps, had settled herself in the original log-cabin of the first settler, beside a swampy bit of ground, near the road. The Woodrow farm-house was on a ridge beyond the wood, and no other dwelling was in sight.

The mysterious manner of life of this woman had no doubt given rise to the bad name which she bore in the neighborhood. She would often disappear for a week or two at a time, and her return seemed to take place invariably in the night. Sometimes a belated farmer would see the single front window of her cabin lighted at midnight, and hear the dulled sound of voices in the stillness. But no one cared to play the spy upon her movements very closely; her great strength and fierce, reckless temper made her dangerous, and her hostility would have been worse than the itching of ungratified curiosity. So they let her alone, taking their revenge in the character they ascribed to her, and the epithets they attached to her name.

When Gilbert, after hitching his horse in a corner of the zigzag picket-fence, climbed over and approached the cabin, Deb. Smith issued from it to meet him, closing the heavy plank door carefully behind her.

"So, Mr. Gilbert!" she cried, stretching out her hard, red hand, "I reckon you want me ag'in. I've been holdin' off from many jobs o' thrashin', this week, because I suspicioned ye 'd be comin' for me."

"Thank you, Deborah!" said he, "you're a friend in need."

"Am I? There you speak the truth. Wait till you see me thump the Devil's tattoo with my old flail on your thrashin'-floor! But you look as cheery as an Easter-mornin' sun; you've not much for to complain of, these days, I guess?"

Gilbert smiled.

"Take care!" she cried, a kindly softness spreading over her rough face, "good luck's deceitful! If I had the strands o' your fortin' in *my* hands, may be I would n't twist 'em even; but I ha'n't, and my fingers is too thick to manage anything smaller'n a rope-knot. You're goin'? Well, look out for me bright and early o' Monday, and my sarvice to your mother!"

As he rode over the second hill, on his way to the village, Gilbert's heart leaped, as he beheld Betsy Lavender just turning into Fairthorn's gate. Except his mother, she was the only person who knew of his love, and he had great need of her kind and cautious assistance.

He had not allowed his heart simply to revel in the ecstasy of its wonderful fortune, or to yearn with inexpressible warmth for Martha's dearest presence, though these emotions haunted him constantly; he had also endeavored to survey the position in which he stood, and to choose the course which would fulfil both his duty towards her and towards his mother. His coming independence would have made the prospect hopefully bright, but for the secret which lay across it like a threatening shadow. Betsy Lavender's assurances had only partially allayed his dread; something hasty and uncertain in her manner still lingered uneasily in his memory, and he felt sure that she knew more than she was willing to tell. Moreover, he craved with all the strength of his heart for another interview with Martha, and he knew of no way to obtain it without Betsy's help.

Her hand was on the gate-latch when his call reached her ears. Looking up the road, she saw that he had stopped his horse between the high, bushy banks, and was beckoning earnestly. Darting a hasty glance at the ivy-draped windows nearest the road, and finding that she was not observed, she hurried to meet him.

"Betsy," he whispered, "I *must* see Martha again before I leave, and you must tell me how."

"Tell me how. Folks say that lovyers' wits are sharp," said she, "but I would n't give much for either o' your'n. I don't like underhanded goin's-on, for my part, for things done in darkness 'll come to light, or somethin' like it; but never mind, if they're crooked everyway they won't run in straight tracks, all 't once't. This I see, and you see, and she sees, that we must all keep as dark as sin."

"But there must be some way," Gilbert insisted. "Do you never walk out together? And could n't we arrange a time — you, too, Betsy, I want you as well!"

"I'm afeard I'd be like the fifth wheel to a wagon."

"No, no! You must be there — you must hear a good part of what I have to say."

"A good part — that 'll do; thought you did n't mean the whole. Don't fret so, lad; you 'll have Roger trampin' me down, next thing. Martha and me talk o' walkin' over to Polly Withers's. She promised Martha a pa'tridge-breasted aloe, and they say you 'vè got to plant it in pewter sand, and only water it once't a month, and how it can grow I can't see; but never mind, all the same — s'pose we say Friday afternoon about three o'clock, goin' through the big woods between the Square and Witherses, and you might have a gun, for the squirls is plenty, and so accidental-like, if anybody should come along" —

"That's it, Betsy!" Gilbert cried, his face flashing "thank you, a thousand times!"

"A thousand times," she repeated. "Once't is enough."

Gilbert rode homewards, after a pleasant call at Fair

thorn's, in a very joyous mood. Not daring to converse with his mother on the one subject which filled his heart, he showed her the calculations which positively assured his independence in a short time. She was never weary of going over the figures, and although her sad, cautious nature always led her to anticipate disappointments, there was now so much already in hand that she was forced to share her son's sanguine views. Gilbert could not help noticing that this idea of independence, for which she had labored so strenuously, seemed to be regarded, in her mind, as the first step towards her mysterious and long-delayed justification; she was so impatient for its accomplishment, her sad brow lightened so, her breath came so much freer as she admitted that his calculations were correct!

Nevertheless, as he frequently referred to the matter on the following days, she at last said, —

"Please, Gilbert, don't always talk so certainly of what is n't over and settled! It makes me fearsome, so to take Providence for granted beforehand. I don't think the Lord likes it, for I've often noticed that it brings disappointment; and I'd rather be humble and submissive in heart, the better to deserve our good fortune when it comes."

"You may be right, mother," he answered; "but it's pleasant to me to see you looking a little more hopeful."

"Ay, lad, I'd never look otherwise, for your sake, if I could." And nothing more was said.

Before sunrise on Monday morning, the rapid, alternate beats of three flails, on Gilbert's threshing-floor, made the autumnal music which the farmer loves to hear. Two of these — Gilbert's and Sam's — kept time with each other, one falling as the other rose; but the third, quick, loud, and filling all the pauses with thundering taps, was wielded by the arm of Deb. Smith. Day by day, the pile of wheat-sheaves lessened in the great bay, and the cone of golden

straw rose higher in the barn-yard. If a certain black jug, behind the barn-door, needed frequent replenishing, Gilbert knew that the strength of its contents passed into the red, bare, muscular arms which shamed his own, and that Deb., while she was under his roof, would allow herself no coarse excess, either of manner or speech. The fierce, defiant look left her face, and when she sat, of an evening, with her pipe in the chimney-corner, both mother and son found her very entertaining company. In Sam she inspired at once admiration and despair. She could take him by the slack of the waist-band and lift him at arm's-length, and he felt that he should never be "a full hand," if he were obliged to equal her performances with the flail.

Thus, his arm keeping time to the rhythm of joy in his heart, and tasting the satisfaction of labor as never before in his life, the days passed to Gilbert Potter. Then came the important Friday, hazy with "the smoke of burning summer," and softly colored with the drifts of golden-rods and crimson sumac leaves along the edges of the yet green forests. Easily feigning an errand to the village, he walked rapidly up the road in the warm afternoon, taking the cross-road to New-Garden just before reaching Hallowell's, and then struck to the right across the fields.

After passing the crest of the hill, the land sloped gradually down to the eastern end of Tuffkenamon valley, which terminates at the ridge upon which Kennett Square stands. Below him, on the right, lay the field and hedge, across which he and Fortune (he wondered what had become of the man) had followed the chase; and before him, on the level, rose the stately trees of the wood which was to be his trysting-place. It was a sweet, peaceful scene, and but for the under-current of trouble upon which all his sensations floated, he could have recognized the beauty and the bliss of human life, which such golden days suggest.

It was scarcely yet two o'clock, and he watched the smooth field nearest the village for full three-quarters of an

hour, before his sharp eyes could detect any moving form upon its surface. To impatience succeeded doubt, to doubt, at its most cruel height, a shock of certainty. Betsy Lavender and Martha Deane had entered the field at the bottom, and, concealed behind the hedge of black-thorn, had walked half-way to the wood before he discovered them, by means of a lucky break in the hedge. With breathless haste he descended the slope, entered the wood at its lower edge, and traversed the tangled thickets of dogwood and haw, until he gained the foot-path, winding through the very heart of the shade.

It was not many minutes before the two advancing forms glimmered among the leaves. As he sprang forward to meet them, Miss Betsy Lavender suddenly exclaimed, — “ Well, I never, Martha ! here ’s wintergreen ! ” and was down on her knees, on the dead leaves, with her long nose nearly touching the plants.

When the lovers saw each other’s eyes, one impulse drew them heart to heart. Each felt the clasp of the other’s arms, and the sweetness of that perfect kiss, which is mutually given, as mutually taken, — the ripe fruit of love, which having once tasted, all its first timid tokens seem ever afterwards immature and unsatisfactory. The hearts of both had unconsciously grown in warmth, in grace and tenderness ; and they now felt, for the first time, the utter, reciprocal surrender of their natures which truly gave them to each other.

As they slowly unwound the blissful embrace, and, holding each other’s hands, drew their faces apart until either’s eyes could receive the other’s beloved countenance, no words were spoken, — and none were needed. Thenceforward, neither would ever say to the other, — “ Do you love me as well as ever ? ” or “ Are you sure you can never change ? ” — for theirs were natures to which such tender doubt and curiosity were foreign. It was not the age of introversion or analytical love ; they were sound, simple,

fervent natures, and believed forever in the great truth which had come to them.

"Gilbert," said Martha, presently, "it was right that we should meet before you leave home. I have much to tell you — for now you must know everything that concerns me ; it is your right."

Her words were very grateful. To hear her say "It is **your** right," sent a thrill of purely unselfish pride through **his** breast. He admitted an equal right, on her part ; the moments were precious, and he hastened to answer her declaration by one as frank and confiding.

"And I," he said, "could not take another step until I had seen you. Do not fear, Martha, to test my patience or my faith in you, for anything you may put upon me will be easy to bear. I have turned our love over and over in my mind ; tried to look at it — as we both must, sooner or later — as something which, though it don't in any wise belong to others, yet with which others have the power to interfere. The world is n't made quite right, Martha, and we 're living in it."

Martha's lip took a firmer curve. "Our love is right, Gilbert," she exclaimed, "and the world must give way !"

"It must — I 've sworn it ! Now let us try to see what are the mountains in our path, and how we can best get around or over them. First, this is my position."

Thereupon Gilbert clearly and rapidly explained to her his precise situation. He set forth his favorable prospects of speedy independence, the obstacle which his mother's secret threw in their way, and his inability to guess any means which might unravel the mystery, and hasten his and her deliverance. The disgrace once removed, he thought, all other impediments to their union would be of trifling importance.

"I see all that clearly," said Martha, when he had finished ; "now, this is *my* position."

She told him frankly her father's plans concerning her,

and gave him, with conscientious minuteness, all the details of Alfred Barton's interview. At first his face grew dark, but at the close he was able to view the subject in its true character, and to contemplate it with as careless a merri-ment as her own.

"You see, Gilbert," were Martha's final words, "how we are situated. If I marry, against my father's consent, before I am twenty-five" —

"Don't speak of your property, Martha!" he cried; "I never took that into mind!"

"I know you did n't, Gilbert, but *I* do! It is mine, and must be mine, to be yours; here you must let me have my own way — I will obey you in everything else. Four years is not long for us to wait, having faith in each other; and in that time, I doubt not, your mother's secret will be revealed. You cannot, must not, press her further; in the meantime we will see each other as often as possible" —

"Four years!" Gilbert interrupted, in a tone almost of despair.

"Well — not quite," said Martha, smiling archly; "since you must know my exact age, Gilbert, I was twenty-one on the second of last February; so that the time is really three years, four months, and eleven days."

"I'd serve seven years, as Jacob served, if need be," he said. "It's not alone the waiting; it's the anxiety, the uncertainty, the terrible fear of that which I don't know. I'm sure that Betsy Lavender guesses something about it; have you told her what my mother says?"

"It was *your* secret, Gilbert."

"I did n't think," he answered, softly. "But it's well she should know. She is the best friend we have. Betsy!"

"A mortal long time afore *I*'m wanted!" exclaimed Miss Lavender, with assumed grimness, as she obeyed the call. "I s'pose you thought there was no watch needed, and both ends o' the path open to all the world. Well — what am *I* to do? — move mountains like a grain o' mustard."

seed (or however it runs), dip out th' ocean with a pint-pot, or ketch old birds with chaff, eh?"

Gilbert, aware that she was familiar with the particular difficulties on Martha's side, now made her acquainted with his own. At the mention of his mother's declaration in regard to his birth, she lifted her hands and nodded her head, listening, thenceforth to the end, with half-closed eyes and her loose lips drawn up in a curious pucker.

"What do you think of it?" he asked, as she remained silent.

"Think of it? About as pretty a snarl as ever I see. I can't say as I'm so over and above taken aback by what your mother says. I've all along had a hankerin' suspicion of it in my bones. Some things seems to me like the smell o' water-melons, that I've knowed to come with fresh snow; you know there *is* no water-melons, but then, there's the smell of 'em! But it won't do to hurry a matter o' this kind — long-sufferin' and slow to anger, though that don't quite suit, but never mind, all the same — my opinion is, ye've both o' ye got to wait!"

"Betsy, do you know nothing about it? Can you guess nothing?" Gilbert persisted.

She stole a quick glance at Martha, which he detected, and a chill ran through his blood. His face grew pale.

"Nothin' that fits your case," said Miss Lavender, presently. She saw the renewal of Gilbert's suspicion, and was casting about in her mind how to allay it without indicating something else which she wished to conceal. "This I'll say," she exclaimed at last, with desperate frankness, "that I *do* know somethin' that may be o' use, when things comes to the wust, as I hope they won't, but it's neither here nor there so far as *you two* are concerned; so don't ask me, for I won't tell, and if it's to be done, I'm the only one to do it! If I've got my little secrets, I'm keepin' 'em in your interest, remember that!"

There was the glimmer of a tear in each of Miss Lavender's eyes before she knew it.

“Betsy, my dear friend!” cried Gilbert, “we know you and trust you. Only say this, for my sake — that you think my mother’s secret is nothing which will part Martha and me!”

“Martha and me. I *do* think so — am I a dragon, or a — what’s that Job talks about? — a behemoth? It’s no use; we must all wait and see what’ll turn up. But, Martha, I’ve rather a bright thought, for a wonder; what if we could bring Alf. Barton into the plot, and git him to help us for the sake o’ *his* bein’ helped?”

Martha looked surprised, but Gilbert flushed up to the roots of his hair, and set his lips firmly together.

“I dunno as it’ll do,” continued Miss Betsy, with perfect indifference to these signs, “but then it *might*. First and foremost, we must try to find out what he wants, for it is n’t you, Martha; so you, Gilbert, might as well be a little more of a cucumber than you are at this present moment. But if it’s nothin’ ag’instant the law, and not likely, for he’s too cute, we might even use a vessel — well, not exackly o’ wrath, but somethin’ like it. There’s more’n one concern at work in all this, it strikes *me*, and it’s wuth while to know ’em all.”

Gilbert was ashamed of his sensitiveness in regard to Barton, especially after Martha’s frank and merry confession; so he declared himself entirely willing to abide by her judgment.

“It would not be pleasant to have Alfred Barton associated with us, even in the way of help,” she said. “I have a woman’s curiosity to know what he means, I confess; but, unless Betsy could make the discovery without me, I would not take any steps towards it.”

“Much would be fittin’ to me, child,” said Miss Lavender, “that would n’t pass for you, at all. We’ve got six weeks till Gilbert comes back, and no need o’ hurry, except our arrand to Polly Withers’s, which’ll come to nothin’, unless you each take leave of other mighty quick, while I’m lookin’ for some more wintergreen.”

With these words she turned short around and strode away.

"It had best be our own secret yet, Martha?" he asked.

"Yes, Gilbert, and all the more precious."

They clasped hands and kissed, once, twice, thrice, and then the underwood slowly deepened between them, and the shadows of the forest separated them from each other.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SANDY FLASH REAPPEARS.

DURING the month of October, while Gilbert Potter was occupied with his lonely and monotonous task, he had ample leisure to evolve a clear, calm, happy purpose from the tumult of his excited feelings. This was, first, to accomplish his own independence, which now seemed inevitably necessary, for his mother's sake, and its possible consequences to her; then, strong in the knowledge of Martha Deane's fidelity, to wait with her.

With the exception of a few days of rainy weather, his hauling prospered, and he returned home after five weeks' absence, to count up the gains of the year and find that very little was lacking of the entire amount to be paid.

Mary Potter, as the prospect of release drew so near, became suddenly anxious and restless. The knowledge that a very large sum of money (as she considered it) was in the house, filled her with a thousand new fears. There were again rumors of Sandy Flash lurking around Marlborough, and she shuddered and trembled whenever his name was mentioned. Her uneasiness became at last so great that Gilbert finally proposed writing to the conveyancer in Chester who held the mortgage, and asking whether the money might not as well be paid at once, since he had it in hand, as wait until the following spring.

"It's not the regular way," said she, "but then, I suppose it'll hold in law. You can ask Mr. Trainer about that. O Gilbert, if it can be done, it'll take a great load off my mind!"

"Whatever puts the mortgage into my hands, mother,"

said he, "is legal enough for us. I need n't even wait to sell the grain; Mark Deane will lend me the seventy-five dollars still to be made up, if he has them — or, if he can't, somebody else will. I was going to the Square this evening; so I'll write the letter at once, and put it in the office."

The first thing Gilbert did, on reaching the village, was to post the letter in season for the mail-rider, who went once a week to and fro between Chester and Peach-bottom Ferry, on the Susquehanna. Then he crossed the street to Dr. Deane's, in order to inquire for Mark, but with the chief hope of seeing Martha for one sweet moment, at least. In this, however, he was disappointed; as he reached the gate, Mark issued from the door.

"Why, Gilbert, old boy!" he shouted; "the sight o' you 's good for sore eyes! What have you been about since that Sunday evening we rode up the west branch? I was jist steppin' over to the tavern to see the fellows — come along, and have a glass o' Rye!"

He threw his heavy arm over Gilbert's shoulder, and drew him along.

"In a minute, Mark; wait a bit — I've a little matter of business with you. I need to borrow seventy-five dollars for a month or six weeks, until my wheat is sold. Have you that much that you 're not using?"

"That and more comin' to me soon," said Mark, "and of course you can have it. Want it right away?"

"Very likely in ten or twelve days."

"Oh, well, never fear — I'll have some accounts squared by that time! Come along!" And therewith the good-natured fellow hurried his friend into the bar-room of the Unicorn.

"Done pretty well, haulin', this time?" asked Mark, as they touched glasses.

"Very well," answered Gilbert, "seeing it 's the last time. I'm at an end with hauling now."

"You don't say so? Here 's to your good luck!" exclaimed Mark, emptying his glass.

A man, who had been tilting his chair against the wall, in the farther corner of the room, now arose and came forward. It was Alfred Barton.

During Gilbert's absence, neither this gentleman's plan nor that of his father, had made much progress. It was tolerably easy, to be sure, to give the old man the impression that the preliminary arrangements with regard to money were going on harmoniously; but it was not so easy to procure Dr. Deane's acceptance of the part marked out for him. Alfred had sought an interview with the latter soon after that which he had had with Martha, and the result was not at all satisfactory. The wooer had been obliged to declare that his suit was unsuccessful; but, he believed, only temporarily so. Martha had been taken by surprise; the question had come upon her so suddenly that she could scarcely be said to know her own mind, and time must be allowed her. Although this statement seemed probable to Dr. Deane, as it coincided with his own experience in previously sounding his daughter's mind, yet Alfred's evident anxiety that nothing should be said to Martha upon the subject, and that the Doctor should assume to his father that the question of balancing her legacy was as good as settled, (then proceed at once to the discussion of the second and more important question,) excited the Doctor's suspicions. He could not well avoid giving the required promise in relation to Martha, but he insisted on seeing the legal evidences of Alfred Barton's property, before going a step further.

The latter was therefore in a state of great perplexity. The game he was playing seemed safe enough, so far, but nothing had come of it, and beyond this point it could not be carried, without great increase of risk. He was more than once tempted to drop it entirely, confessing his complete and final rejection, and allowing his father to take

what course he pleased; but presently the itching of his avaricious curiosity returned in full force, and suggested new expedients.

No suspicion of Gilbert Potter's relation to Martha Deane had ever entered his mind. He had always had a liking for the young man, and would, no doubt, have done him any good service which did not require the use of money. He now came forward very cordially and shook hands with the two.

Gilbert had self-possession enough to control his first impulse, and to meet his rival with his former manner. Secure in his own fortune, he even felt that he could afford to be magnanimous, and thus, by degrees, the dislike wore off which Martha's confession had excited.

"What is all this talk about Sandy Flash?" he asked.

"He's been seen up above," said Barton; "some say, about Marlborough, and some, along the Strasburg road. He'll hardly come this way; he's too cunning to go where the people are prepared to receive him."

If either of the three had happened to look steadily at the back window of the bar-room, they might have detected, in the dusk, the face of Dougherty, the Irish ostler of the Unicorn Tavern. It disappeared instantly, but there was a crack nearly half an inch wide between the bottom of the back-door and the sill under it, and to that crack a large, flat ear was laid.

"If he comes any nearer, you must send word around at once," said Gilbert, — "not wait until he's already among us."

"Let me alone for that!" Barton exclaimed; "Damn him, I only wish he had piuck enough to come!"

Mark was indignant. "What's the sheriff and constables good for?" he cried. "It's a burnin' shame that the whole country has been plundered so long, and the fellow still runnin' at large. Much he cares for the five hundred dollars on his head."

"It's a thousand, now," said Barton. "They've doubled it."

"Come, that'd be a good haul for us. We're not bound to keep inside of our township; I'm for an up and down chase all over the country, as soon as the fall work's over!"

"And I, too," said Gilbert.

"You're fellows after my own heart, both o' you!" Barton asserted, slapping them upon the back. "What'll you take to drink?"

By this time several others had assembled, and the conversation became general. While the flying rumors about Sandy Flash were being produced and discussed, Barton drew Gilbert aside.

"Suppose we step out on the back-porch," he said, "I want to have a word with you."

The door closed between them and the noisy bar-room. There was a rustling noise under the porch, as of a fowl disturbed on its roost, and then everything was still.

"Your speaking of your having done well by hauling put it into my head, Gilbert," Barton continued. "I wanted to borrow a little money for a while, and there's reasons why I should n't call upon anybody who'd tell of it. Now, as you've got it, lying idle" —

"It happens to be just the other way, Barton," said Gilbert, interrupting him. "I came here to-night to borrow."

"How's that?" Barton could not help asking, with a momentary sense of chagrin. But the next moment he added, in a milder tone, "I don't mean to pry into your business."

"I shall very likely have to use my money soon," Gilbert explained, "and must at least wait until I hear from Chester. That will be another week, and then, if the money should not be wanted, I can accommodate you. But, to tell you the truth, I don't think there's much chance of that."

"Shall you have to go down to Chester?"

"I hope so."

"When?"

"In ten or twelve days from now."

"Then," said Barton, "I'll fix it this way. 'Tis n't only the money I want, but to have it paid in Chester, without the old man or Stacy knowing anything of the matter. If I was to go myself, Stacy 'd never rest till he found out my business — Faith! I believe if I was hid in the hayloft o' the William Penn Tavern, he'd scent me out. Now, I can get the money of another fellow I know, if you'll take it down and hand it over for me. Would you be that obliging?"

"Of course," Gilbert answered. "If I go it will be no additional trouble."

"All right," said Barton, "between ourselves, you understand."

A week later, a letter, with the following address was brought to the post-office by the mail-rider, —

*"To Mr. Gilbert Potter, Esq^r
Kennett Square P. O.
These, with Care and Speed."*

Gilbert, having carefully cut around the wafer and unfolded the sheet of strong yellowish paper, read this missive, —

"SIR: Y^r resp^d favour of y^e 1 11th came duly to hand, and y^e proposition w^h it contains has been submitted to M^r Jones, y^e present houlder of y^e mortgage. He wishes me to inform you that he did not anticipate y^e payment before y^e first day of April, 1797, w^h was y^e term agreed upon at y^e payment of y^e first note; nevertheless, being

¹ This form of the article, though in general disuse at the time, was still frequently employed in epistolary writing, in that part of Pennsylvania.

required to accept full and lawful payment, whensoever tendered, he hath impowered me to receive y^e moneys at y^r convenience, providing y^e settlement be full and compleat, as aforesaid, and not merely y^e payment of a part or portion thereof.

“Y^r ob’t serv’t,

“ISAAC TRAINER.”

Gilbert, with his limited experience of business matters, had entirely overlooked the fact, that the permission of the creditor is not necessary to the payment of a debt. He had a profound respect for all legal forms, and his indebtedness carried with it a sense of stern and perpetual responsibility, which, alas! has not always been inherited by the descendants of that simple and primitive period.

Mary Potter received the news with a sigh of relief. The money was again counted, the interest which would be due somewhat laboriously computed, and finally nothing remained but the sum which Mark Deane had promised to furnish. This Mark expected to receive on the following Wednesday, and Gilbert and his mother agreed that the journey to Chester should be made at the close of the same week.

They went over these calculations in the quiet of the Sabbath afternoon, sitting alone in the neat, old-fashioned kitchen, with the dim light of an Indian-summer sun striking through the leafless trumpet-vines, and making a quaint network of light and shade on the whitewashed window-frame. The pendulum ticked drowsily along the opposite wall, and the hickory back-log on the hearth hummed a lamentable song through all its simmering pores of sap. Peaceful as the happy landscape without, dozing in dreams of the departed summer, cheery as the tidy household signs within, seemed at last the lives of the two inmates. Mary Potter had not asked how her son’s wooing had further sped, but she felt that he was contented of heart; she, too,

indulging finally in the near consummation of her hopes, — which touched her like the pitying sympathy of the Power that had dealt so singularly with her life, — was nearer the feeling of happiness than she had been for long and weary years.

Gilbert was moved by the serenity of her face, and the trouble, which he knew it concealed, seemed, to his mind, to be wearing away. Carefully securing the doors, they walked over the fields together, pausing on the hill-top to listen to the caw of the gathering crows, or to watch the ruby disc of the beamless sun stooping to touch the western rim of the valley. Many a time had they thus gone over the farm together, but never before with such a sense of peace and security. The day was removed, mysteriously, from the circle of its fellows, and set apart by a peculiar influence which prevented either from ever forgetting it, during all the years that came after.

They were not aware that at the very moment this influence was profoundest in their hearts, new rumors of Sandy Flash's movements had reached Kennett Square, and were being excitedly discussed at the Unicorn Tavern. He had been met on the Street Road, riding towards the Red Lion, that very afternoon, by a man who knew his face; and, later in the evening came a second report, that an individual of his build had crossed the Philadelphia Road, this side of the Anvil, and gone southward into the woods. Many were the surmises, and even detailed accounts, of robberies that either had been or might be committed, but no one could say precisely how much was true.

Mark Deane was not at home, and the blacksmith was commissioned to summon Alfred Barton, who had ridden over to Pennsbury, on a friendly visit to Mr. Joel Ferris. When he finally made his appearance, towards ten o'clock, he was secretly horror-stricken at the great danger he had escaped; but it gave him an admirable opportunity to swagger. He could do no less than promise to summon

the volunteers in the morning, and provision was made accordingly, for despatching as many messengers as the village could afford.

Since the British occupation, nearly twenty years before, Kennett Square had not known as lively a day as that which followed. The men and boys were in the street, grouped in front of the tavern, the women at the windows, watching, some with alarmed, but many with amused faces. Sally Fairthorn, although it was washing-day, stole up through Dr. Deane's garden and into Martha's room, for at least half an hour, but Joe and Jake left their overturned shocks of corn unhusked for the whole day.

Some of the young farmers to whom the message had been sent, returned answer that they were very busy and could not leave their work; the horses of others were lame, the guns of others broken. By ten o'clock, however, there were nine volunteers, very irregularly armed and mounted, in attendance; by eleven o'clock, thirteen, and Alfred Barton, whose place as leader was anything but comfortable, began to swell with an air of importance, and set about examining the guns of his command. Neither he nor any one else noticed particularly that the Irish ostler appeared to be a great connoisseur in muskets, and was especially interested in the structure of the flints and pans.

"Let's look over the roll, and see how many are true blue," said Barton, drawing a paper from his pocket. "There's failing nine or ten, among 'em some I fully counted on — Withers, he *may* come yet; Ferris, hardly time to get word; but Carson, Potter, and Travilla ought to turn up curst soon, or we'll have the sport without 'em!"

"Give me a horse, Mr. Barton, and I'll ride down for Gilbert!" cried Joe Fairthorn.

"No use, — Giles went this morning," growled Barton.

"It's time we were starting; which road would be best to take?" asked one of the volunteers.

"All roads lead to Rome, but all don't lead to Sandy

Flash, ha ! ha .” said another, laughing at his own smartness.

“ Who knows where he was seen last ? ” Barton asked, but it was not easy to get a coherent answer. One had heard one report, and another another ; he had been seen from the Street Road on the north all the way around eastward by the Red Lion and the Anvil, and in the rocky glen below the Barton farm, to the lime-quarries of Tuffkenamon on the west.

“ Unless we scatter, it ’ll be like looking for a needle in a haystack,” remarked one of the more courageous volunteers.

“ If they ’d all had spunk enough to come,” said Barton, “ we might ha’ made four parties, and gone out on each road. As it is, we ’re only strong enough for two.”

“ Seven to one ? — that ’s too much odds in Sandy’s favor ! ” cried a light-headed youth, whereat the others all laughed, and some of them blushed a little.

Barton bit his lip, and with a withering glance at the young man, replied, — “ Then we ’ll make three parties, and you shall be the third.”

Another quarter of an hour having elapsed, without any accession to the troop, Barton reluctantly advised the men to get their arms, which had been carelessly placed along the tavern-porch, and to mount for the chase.

Just then Joe and Jake Fairthorn, who had been dodging back and forth through the village, watching the roads, made their appearance with the announcement, —

“ Hurray — there ’s another — comin’ up from below, but it a’n’t Gilbert. He ’s stuck full o’ pistols, but he ’s a-foot, and you must git him a horse. I tell you, he looks like a real buster ! ”

“ Who can it be ? ” asked Barton.

“ We ’ll see, in a minute,” said the nearest volunteers, taking up their muskets.

“ There he is, — there he is ! ” cried Joe.

All eyes, turned towards the crossing of the roads, beheld, just rounding the corner-house, fifty paces distant, a short, broad-shouldered, determined figure, making directly for the tavern. His face was red and freckled, his thin lips half-parted with a grin which showed the flash of white teeth between them, and his eyes sparkled with the light of a cold, fierce courage. He had a double-barrelled musket on his shoulder, and there were four pistols in the tight leathern belt about his waist.

Barton turned deadly pale as he beheld this man. An astonished silence fell upon the group, but, the next moment, some voice exclaimed, in an undertone, which, nevertheless, every one heard, —

“By the living Lord! Sandy Flash himself!”

There was a general confused movement, of which Alfred Barton took advantage to partly cover his heavy body by one of the porch-pillars. Some of the volunteers started back, others pressed closer together. The pert youth, alone, who was to form the third party, brought his musket to his shoulder.

Quick as lightning Sandy Flash drew a pistol from his belt and levelled it at the young man's breast.

“Ground arms!” he cried, “or you are a dead man.”

He was obeyed, although slowly and with grinding teeth.

“Stand aside!” he then commanded. “*You* have pluck, and I should hate to shoot you. Make way, the rest o’ ye! I’ve saved ye the trouble o’ ridin’ far to find me. Whoever puts finger to trigger, falls. Back, back, I say, and open the door for me!”

Still advancing as he spoke, and shifting his pistol so as to cover now one, now another of the group, he reached the tavern-porch. Some one opened the door of the bar-room, which swung inwards. The highwayman strode directly to the bar, and there stood, facing the open door, while he cried to the trembling bar-keeper, —

“A glass o’ Rye, good and strong!”

It was set before him. Holding the musket in his arm, he took the glass, drank, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and then, spinning a silver dollar into the air, said, as it rang upon the floor, —

“I stand treat to-day ; let the rest o’ the gentlemen drink at my expense !”

He then walked out, and slowly retreated backwards towards the corner-house, covering his retreat with the levelled pistol, and the flash of his dauntless eye.

He had nearly reached the corner, when Gilbert Potter dashed up behind him, with Roger all in a foam. Joe Fairthorn, seized with deadly terror when he heard the terrible name, had set off at full speed for home ; but describing Gilbert approaching on a gallop, changed his course, met the latter, and gasped out the astounding intelligence. All this was the work of a minute, and when Gilbert reached the corner, a single glance showed him the true state of affairs. The confused group in front of the tavern, some faces sallow with cowardice, some red with indignation and shame ; the solitary, retreating figure, alive in every nerve with splendid courage, told him the whole story, which Joe’s broken words had only half hinted.

Flinging himself from his horse, he levelled his musket, and cried out, —

“Surrender !”

Sandy Flash, with a sudden spring, placed his back against the house, pointed his pistol at Gilbert, and said : *“Drop your gun, or I fire !”*

For answer, Gilbert drew the trigger ; the crack of the explosion rang sharp and clear, and a little shower of mortar covered Sandy Flash’s cocked hat. The ball had struck the wall about four inches above his head.

He leaped forward ; Gilbert clubbed his musket and awaited him. They were scarcely two yards apart ; the highwayman’s pistol-barrel was opposite Gilbert’s heart, and the two men were looking into each other’s eyes.

The group in front of the tavern stood as if paralyzed every man holding his breath.

"Halt!" said Sandy Flash. "Halt! I hate bloodshed, and besides that, young Potter, you're not the man that'll take me prisoner. I could blow your brains out by movin' this finger, but *you're* safe from any bullet o' mine, whoever a'n't!"

At the last words a bright, mocking, malicious grin stole over his face. Gilbert, amazed to find himself known to the highwayman, and puzzled with certain familiar marks in the latter's countenance, was swiftly enlightened by this grin. It was Fortune's face before him, without the black hair and whiskers, — and Fortune's voice that spoke!

Sandy Flash saw the recognition. He grinned again. "You'll know your friend, another time," he said, sprang five feet backward, whirled, gained the cover of the house, and was mounting his horse among the bushes at the bottom of the garden, before any of the others reached Gilbert, who was still standing as if thunder-struck.

By this time Sandy Flash had leaped the hedge and was careering like lightning towards the shelter of the woods. The interest now turned upon Gilbert Potter, who was very taciturn and thoughtful, and had little to relate. They noticed, however, that his eyes were turned often and inquiringly upon Alfred Barton, and that the latter as steadily avoided meeting them.

When Gilbert went to bring Roger, who had quietly waited at the crossing of the roads, Deb. Smith suddenly made her appearance.

"I seen it all," she said. "I was a bit up the road, but I seen it. You should n't ha' shot, Mr. Gilbert, though it is n't him that's born to be hit with a bullet; but *you're* safe enough from *his* bullets, anyhow — whatever happens, *you're* safe!"

"What do you mean, Deborah?" he exclaimed, as *she* almost repeated to him Sandy Flash's very words.

"I mean what I say," she answered. "*You* would n't be afeard, but it'll be a comfort to your mother. I must have a drink o' whiskey after that sight."

With these words she elbowed her way into the bar-room. Most of the Kennett Volunteers were there engaged in carrying out a similar resolution. They would gladly have kept the whole occurrence secret, but that was impossible. It was known all over the country, in three days, and the story of it has not yet died out of the local **annals.**

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HUSKING FROLIC.

JAKE FAIRTHORN rushed into Dr. Deane's door with a howl of terror.

"Cousin Martha! Betsy!" he cried; "he's goin' to shoot Gilbert!"

"None o' your tricks, boy!" Betsy Lavender exclaimed, in her most savage tone, as she saw the paleness of Martha's face. "I'm up to 'em. Who'd shoot Gilbert Potter? Not Alf Barton, I'll be bound; he'd be afeard to shoot even Sandy Flash!"

"It's Sandy Flash, — he's there! Gilbert shot his hat off!" cried Jake.

"The Lord have mercy!" And the next minute Miss Betsy found herself, she scarcely knew how, in the road.

Both had heard the shot, but supposed that it was some volunteer discharging an old load from his musket; they knew nothing of Sandy's visit to the Unicorn, and Jake's announcement seemed simply incredible.

"O you wicked boy! What'll become o' you?" cried Miss Lavender, as she beheld Gilbert Potter approaching, leading Roger by the bridle. But at the same instant she saw, from the faces of the crowd, that something unusual had happened. While the others instantly surrounded Gilbert, the young volunteer who alone had made any show of fight, told the story to the two ladies. Martha Deane's momentary shock of terror disappeared under the rush of mingled pride and scorn which the narrative called up in her heart.

"What a pack of cowards!" she exclaimed, her cheeks flushing, — "to stand still and see the life of the only man that dares to face a robber at the mercy of the robber's pistol!"

Gilbert approached. His face was grave and thoughtful, but his eye brightened as it met hers. No two hands ever conveyed so many and such swift messages as theirs, in the single moment when they touched each other. The other women of the village crowded around, and he was obliged, though with evident reluctance, to relate his share in the event.

In the mean time the volunteers had issued from the tavern, and were loudly discussing what course to pursue. The most of them were in favor of instant pursuit. To their credit it must be said that very few of them were actual cowards; they had been both surprised by the incredible daring of the highwayman, and betrayed by the cowardly inefficiency of their own leader. Barton, restored to his usual complexion by two glasses of whiskey, was nearly ready to head a chase which he suspected would come to nothing; but the pert young volunteer, who had been whispering with some of the younger men, suddenly cried out, —

"I say, fellows, we've had about enough o' Barton's command; and I, for one, am a-goin' to enlist under Captain Potter."

"Good!" "Agreed!" responded a number of others, and some eight or ten stepped to one side. The few remaining around Alfred Barton began to look doubtful, and all eyes were turned curiously upon him.

Gilbert, however, stepped forward and said: "It's bad policy to divide our forces just now, when we ought to be off on the hunt. Mr. Barton, we all know, got up the company, and I am willing to serve under him, if he'll order us to mount at once! If not, rather than lose more time, I'll head as many as are ready to go."

Barton saw how the tide was turning, and suddenly determined to cover up his shame, if possible, with a mantle of magnanimity.

"The fellows are right, Gilbert!" he said. "You deserve to take the lead to-day, so go ahead; I'll follow you!"

"Mount, then, all of you!" Gilbert cried, without further hesitation. In a second he was on Roger's back. "You, Barton," he ordered, "take three with you and make for the New-Garden cross-road as fast as you can. Pratt, you and three more towards the Hammer-and-Trowel; while I, with the rest, follow the direct trail."

No more time was wasted in talking. The men took their guns and mounted, the two detached commands were told off, and in five minutes the village was left to its own inhabitants.

Gilbert had a long and perplexing chase, but very little came of it. The trail of Sandy Flash's horse was followed without much difficulty until it struck the west branch of Redley Creek. There it suddenly ceased, and more than an hour elapsed before some one discovered it, near the road, a quarter of a mile further up the stream. Thence it turned towards the Hammer-and-Trowel, but no one at the farm-houses on the road had seen any one pass except a Quaker, wearing the usual broad-brimmed hat and drab coat, and mounted on a large, sleepy-looking horse.

About the middle of the afternoon, Gilbert detected, in one of the lanes leading across to the Street Road, the marks of a galloping steed, and those who had a little lingering knowledge of wood-craft noticed that the gallop often ceased suddenly, changed to a walk, and was then as suddenly resumed. Along the Street Road no one had been seen except a Quaker, apparently the same person. Gilbert and his hunters now suspected the disguise, but the difficulty of following the trail had increased with every hour of lost time; and after scouring along the Brandywine and then crossing into the Pocopsin valley, they finally

gave up the chase, late in the day. It was the general opinion that Sandy had struck northward, and was probably safe in one of his lairs among the Welch Mountains.

When they reached the Unicorn tavern at dusk, Gilbert found Joe Fairthorn impatiently waiting for him. Sally had been "tearin' around like mad," (so Joe described his sister's excitement,) having twice visited the village during the afternoon in the hope of seeing the hero of the day — after Sandy Flash, of course, who had, and deserved, the first place.

"And, Gilbert," said Joe, "I was n't to forgit to tell you that we 're a-goin' to have a huskin' frolic o' Wednesday night, — day after to-morrow, you know. Dad's behind-hand with huskin', and the moon's goin' to be full, and Mark he said Let 's have a frolic, and I 'm comin' home to meet Gilbert anyhow, and so I 'll be there. And Sally she said I 'll have Martha and lots o' girls, only we shan't come out into the field till you 're nigh about done. Then Mark he said That won't take long, and if you don't help me with my shocks I won't come, and Sally she hit him, and so it 's all agreed. And you 'll come, Gilbert, won't you?"

"Yes, yes, Joe," Gilbert answered, a little impatiently, "tell Sally I 'll come." Then he turned Roger's head towards home.

He was glad of the solitary ride which allowed him to collect his thoughts. Fearless as was his nature, the danger he had escaped might well have been cause for grave self-congratulation; but the thought of it scarcely lingered beyond the moment of the encounter. The astonishing discovery that the stranger, Fortune, and the redoubtable Sandy Flash were one and the same person; the mysterious words which this person had addressed to him; the repetition of the same words by Deb. Smith, — all these facts, suggesting, as their common solution, some secret which concerned himself, perplexed his mind, already more than sufficiently occupied with mystery.

It suddenly flashed across his memory, as he rode homeward, that on the evening when he returned from the fox-chase, his mother had manifested an unusual interest in the strange huntsman, questioning him minutely as to the latter's appearance. Was she — or, rather, had she been, at one time of her life — acquainted with Sandy Flash? And if so —

“No!” he cried aloud, “it is impossible! It could not — cannot be!” The new possibility which assailed him was even more terrible than his previous belief in the dishonor of his birth. Better, a thousand times, he thought, be basely born than the son of an outlaw! It seemed that every attempt he made to probe his mother's secret threatened to overwhelm him with a knowledge far worse than the fret of his ignorance. Why not be patient, therefore, leaving the solution to her and to time?

Nevertheless, a burning curiosity led him to relate to his mother, that evening, the events of the day. He watched her closely as he described his encounter with the highwayman, and repeated the latter's words. It was quite natural that Mary Potter should shudder and turn pale during the recital — quite natural that a quick expression of relief should shine from her face at the close; but Gilbert could not be sure that her interest extended to any one except himself. She suggested no explanation of Sandy Flash's words, and he asked none.

“I shall know no peace, child,” she said, “until the money has been paid, and the mortgage is in your hands.”

“You won't have long to wait, now, mother,” he answered cheerily. “I shall see Mark on Wednesday evening, and therefore can start for Chester on Friday, come rain or shine. As for Sandy Flash, he's no doubt up on the Welch Mountain by this time. It is n't his way to turn up twice in succession, in the same place.”

“You don't know him, Gilbert. He won't soon forget that you shot at him.”

"I seem to be safe enough, if he tells the truth." Gilbert could not help remarking.

Mary Potter shook her head, and said nothing.

Two more lovely Indian-summer days went by, and as the wine-red sun slowly quenched his lower limb in the denser smoke along the horizon, the great bronzed moon struggled out of it, on the opposite rim of the sky. It was a weird light and a weird atmosphere, such as we might imagine overspreading Babylonian ruins, on the lone plains of the Euphrates; but no such fancies either charmed or tormented the lusty, wide-awake, practical lads and lasses, whom the brightening moon beheld on their way to the Fairthorn farm. "The best night for huskin' that ever was," comprised the sum of their appreciation.

At the old farm-house there was great stir of preparation. Sally, with her gown pinned up, dodged in and out of kitchen and sitting-room, catching herself on every door-handle, while Mother Fairthorn, beaming with quiet content, stood by the fire, and inspected the great kettles which were to contain the materials for the midnight supper. Both were relieved when Betsy Lavender made her appearance, saying, —

"Let down your gownd, Sally, and give *me* that ladle. What 'd be a mighty heap o' work for you, in that flustered condition, is child's-play to the likes o' me, that 's as steady as a cart-horse, — not that self-praise, as the sayin' is, is any recommendation, — but my kickin' and prancin' days is over, and high time, too."

"No, Betsy, I'll not allow it!" cried Sally. "You must enjoy yourself, too." But she had parted with the ladle while speaking, and Miss Lavender, repeating the words "Enjoy yourself, too!" quietly took her place in the kitchen.

The young men, as they arrived, took their way to the corn-field, piloted by Joe and Jake Fairthorn. These boys each carried a wallet over his shoulders, the jug in the front

end balancing that behind, and the only casualty that occurred was when Jake, jumping down from a fence, allowed his jugs to smite together, breaking one of them to shivers.

"There, that 'll come out o' your pig-money," said Joe.

"I don't care," Jake retorted, "if daddy only pays me the rest."

The boys, it must be known, received every year the two smallest pigs of the old sow's litter, with the understanding that these were to be their separate property, on condition of their properly feeding and fostering the whole herd. This duty they performed with great zeal and enthusiasm, and numberless and splendid were the castles which they built with the coming money; yet, alas! when the pigs were sold, it always happened that Farmer Fairthorn found some inconvenient debt pressing him, and the boys' pig-money was therefore taken as a loan, — only as a loan, — and permanently invested.

There were between three and four hundred shocks to husk, and the young men, armed with husking-pegs of hickory, fastened by a leathern strap over the two middle fingers, went bravely to work. Mark Deane, who had reached home that afternoon, wore the seventy-five dollars in a buckskin belt around his waist, and anxiously awaited the arrival of Gilbert Potter, of whose adventure he had already heard. Mark's presumed obligations to Alfred Barton prevented him from expressing his overpowering contempt for that gentleman's conduct, but he was not obliged to hold his tongue about Gilbert's pluck and decision, and he did not.

The latter, detained at the house by Mother Fairthorn and Sally, — both of whom looked upon him as one arisen from the dead, — did not reach the field until the others had selected their rows, overturned the shocks, and were seated in a rustling line, in the moonlight.

"Gilbert!" shouted Mark, "come here! I've kep' the row next to mine, for you! And I want to get a grip o' your hand, my bold boy!"

He sprang up, flinging an armful of stalks behind him, and with difficulty restrained an impulse to clasp Gilbert to his broad breast. It was not the custom of the neighborhood; the noblest masculine friendship would have been described by the people in no other terms than "They are very thick," and men who loved each other were accustomed to be satisfied with the knowledge. The strong moonlight revealed to Gilbert Potter the honest heart which looked out of Mark's blue eyes, as the latter held his hand like a vice, and said, —

"I've heard all about it."

"More than there was occasion for, very likely," Gilbert replied. "I'll tell you my story some day, Mark; but to-night we must work and not talk."

"All right, Gilbert. I say, though, I've got the money you wanted; we'll fix the matter after supper."

The rustling of the corn-stalks recommenced, and the tented lines of shocks slowly fell as the huskers worked their way over the brow of the hill, whence the ground sloped down into a broad belt of shade, cast by the woods in the bottom. Two or three dogs which had accompanied their masters coursed about the field, or darted into the woods in search of an opossum-trail. Joe and Jake Fairthorn would gladly have followed them, but were afraid of venturing into the mysterious gloom; so they amused themselves with putting on the coats which the men had thrown aside, and gravely marched up and down the line, commending the rapid and threatening the tardy workers.

Ere long, the silence was broken by many a shout of exultation or banter, many a merry sound of jest or fun, as the back of the night's task was fairly broken. One husker mimicked the hoot of an owl in the thickets below; another sang a melody popular at the time, the refrain of which was, —

"Be it late or early, be it late or soon,
It's I will enjoy the sweet rose in June!"

"Sing out, boys!" shouted Mark, "so the girls can hear you! It's time they were comin' to look after us."

"Sing, yourself!" some one replied. "You can out-bellow the whole raft."

Without more ado, Mark opened his mouth and began chanting, in a ponderous voice, —

"On yonder mountain summit
My castle you will find,
Renown'd in ancient historee, —
My name it's Rinardine!"

Presently, from the upper edge of the wood, several feminine voices were heard, singing another part of the same song: —

"Beware of meeting Rinar,
All on the mountains high!"

Such a shout of fun ran over the field, that the frightened owl ceased his hooting in the thicket. The moon stood high, and turned the night-haze into diffused silver. Though the hollows were chill with gathering frost, the air was still mild and dry on the hills, and the young ladies, in their warm gowns of home-made flannel, enjoyed both the splendor of the night and the lively emulation of the scattered laborers.

"Turn to, and give us a lift, girls," said Mark.

"Beware of meeting Rinar!" Sally laughed.

"Because you know what you promised him, Sally," he retorted. "Come, a bargain's a bargain; there's the outside row standin' — not enough of us to stretch all the way across the field — so let's you and me take that and bring it down square with th' others. The rest may keep my row a-goin', if they can."

Two or three of the other maidens had cut the supporting stalks of the next shock, and overturned it with much laughing. "I can't husk, Mark," said Martha Deane, "but I'll promise to superintend these, if you will keep Sally to her word."

There was a little running hither and thither, a show of fight, a mock scramble, and it ended by Sally tumbling over a pumpkin, and then being carried off by Mark to the end of the outside row of shocks, some distance in the rear of the line of work. Here he laid the stalks straight for her, doubled his coat and placed it on the ground for a seat, and then took his place on the other side of the shock.

Sally husked a few ears in silence, but presently found it more agreeable to watch her partner, as he bent to the labor, ripping the covering from each ear with one or two rapid motions, snapping the cob, and flinging the ear over his shoulder into the very centre of the heap, without turning his head. When the shock was finished, there were five stalks on her side, and fifty on Mark's.

He laughed at the extent of her help, but, seeing how bright and beautiful her face looked in the moonlight, how round and supple her form, contrasted with his own rough proportions, he added, in a lower tone, —

“Never mind the work, Sally — I only wanted to have you with me.”

Sally was silent, but happy, and Mark proceeded to overthrow the next shock.

When they were again seated face to face, he no longer bent so steadily over the stalks, but lifted his head now and then to watch the gloss of the moon on her black hair, and the mellow gleam that seemed to slide along her cheek and chin, playing with the shadows, as she moved.

“Sally!” he said at last, “you must ha’ seen, over and over ag’in, that I like to be with you. Do you care for me, at all?”

She flushed and trembled a little as she answered, —
“Yes, Mark, I do.”

He husked half a dozen ears rapidly, then looked up again and asked, —

“Do you care enough for me, Sally, to take me for good

and all? I can't put it into fine speech, but I love you dearly and honestly; will you marry me?"

Sally bent down her head, so choked with the long-delayed joy that she found it impossible to speak. Mark finished the few remaining stalks and put them behind him; he sat upon the ground at her feet.

"There's my hand, Sally; will you take it, and me with it?"

Her hand slowly made its way into his broad, hard palm. Once the surrender expressed, her confusion vanished; she lifted her head for his kiss, then leaned it on his shoulder and whispered, —

"Oh, Mark, I've loved you for ever and ever so long a time!"

"Why, Sally, deary," said he, "that's my case, too; and I seemed to feel it in my bones that we was to be a pair; only, you know, I had to get a foothold first. I could n't come to you with empty hands — though, faith! there's not much to speak of in 'em!"

"Never mind that, Mark, — I'm so glad you want me!"

And indeed she was; why should she not, therefore, say so?

"There's no need o' broken sixpences, or true-lovers' knots, I guess," said Mark, giving her another kiss. "I'm a plain-spoken fellow, and when I say I want you for my wife, Sally, I mean it. But we must n't be settin' here, with the row unhusked; that'll never do. See if I don't make the ears spin! And I guess you can help me a little now, can't you?"

With a jolly laugh, Mark picked up the corn-cutter and swung it above the next shock. In another instant it would have fallen, but a loud shriek burst out from the bundled stalks, and Joe Fairthorn crept forth on his hands and knees.

The lovers stood petrified. "Why, you young devil!" exclaimed Mark, while the single word "JOE!" which came

from Sally's lips, contained the concentrated essence of a thousand slaps.

"Don't — don't!" whimpered Joe. "I'll not tell any body, indeed I won't!"

"If you do," threatened Mark, brandishing the corn-cutter, "it is n't your legs I shall cut off, but your head, even with the shoulders. What were you doin' in that shock?"

"I wanted to hear what you and Sally were sayin' to each other. Folks said you two was a-courtin'," Joe answered.

The comical aspect of the matter suddenly struck Mark, and he burst into a roar of laughter.

"Mark, how can you?" said Sally, bridling a little.

"Well, — it's all in the fam'ly, after all. Joe, tarnation scamp as he is, is long-headed enough to keep his mouth shut, rather than have people laugh at his relations — eh, Joe?"

"I said I'd never say a word," Joe affirmed, "and I won't. You see if I even tell Jake. But I say, Mark, when you and Sally get married, will you be my uncle?"

"It depends on your behavior," Mark gravely answered, seating himself to husk. Joe magnanimously left the lovers, and pitched over the third shock ahead, upon which he began to husk with might and main, in order to help them out with their task.

By the time the outside row was squared, the line had reached the bottom of the slope, where the air was chill, although the shadows of the forest had shifted from the field. Then there was a race among the huskers for the fence, the girls promising that he whose row was first husked out, should sit at the head of the table, and be called King of the Corn-field. The stalks rustled, the cobs snapped, the ears fell like a shower of golden cones, and amid much noise and merriment, not only the victor's row but all the others were finished, and Farmer Fairthorn's field stood husked from end to end.

Gilbert Potter had done his share of the work steadily, and as silently as the curiosity of the girls, still excited by his recent adventure, would allow. It was enough for him that he caught a chance word, now and then, from Martha. The emulation of the race with which the husking closed favored them, and he gladly lost a very fair chance of becoming King of the Corn-field for the opportunity of asking her to assist him in contriving a brief interview, on the way to the house.

Where two work together to the same end, there is no doubt about the result, especially as, in this case, the company preferred returning through the wood instead of crossing the open, high-fenced fields. When they found themselves together, out of ear-shot of the others, Gilbert lost no time in relating the particulars of his encounter with Sandy Flash, the discovery he had made, and the mysterious assurance of Deb. Smith.

Martha listened with the keenest interest. "It is very, very strange," she said, "and the strangest of all is that he should be that man, Fortune. As for his words, I do not find them so singular. He has certainly the grandest courage, robber as he is, and he admires the same quality in you; no doubt you made a favorable impression upon him on the day of the fox-chase; and so, although you are hunting him down, he will not injure you, if he can help it. I find all that very natural, in a man of his nature."

"But Deb. Smith?" Gilbert asked.

"That," said Martha, "is rather a curious coincidence, but nothing more. I think.— She is said to be a superstitious creature, and if you have ever befriended her, — and you may have done so, Gilbert, without your good heart being aware of it, — she thinks that her spells, or charms, or what not, will save you from harm. No, I was wrong; it is not so very strange, except Fortune's intimacy with Alfred Barton, which everybody was talking about at the time."

Gilbert drew a deep breath of relief. How the darkness of his new fear vanished, in the light of Martha's calm, sensible words! "How wonderfully you have guessed the truth!" he cried. "So it is; Deb. Smith thinks she is beholden to me for kind treatment; she blew upon my palm, in a mysterious way, and said she would stand by me in time of need! But that about Fortune puzzles me. I can see that Barton is very shy of me since he thinks I've made the discovery."

"We must ask Betsy Lavender's counsel, there," said Martha. "It is beyond my depth."

The supper smoked upon the table when they reached the farm-house. It had been well earned, and it was enjoyed, both in a physical and a social sense, to the very extent of the guests' capacities. The King sat at the head of the table, and Gilbert Potter — forced into that position by Mark — at the foot. Sally Fairthorn insisted on performing her duty as handmaiden, although, as Betsy Lavender again and again declared, her room was better than her help. Sally's dark eyes fairly danced and sparkled; her full, soft lips shone with a scarlet bloom; she laughed with a wild, nervous joyousness, and yet rushed about haunted with a fearful dread of suddenly bursting into tears. Her ways were so well known, however, that a little extra impulsiveness excited no surprise. Martha Deane was the only person who discovered what had taken place. As the girls were putting on their hats and cloaks in the bed-room, Sally drew her into the passage, kissed her a number of times with passionate vehemence, and then darted off without saying a word.

Gilbert rode home through the splendid moonlight, in the small hours of the morning, with a light heart, and Mark's money-belt buckled around his waist.

CHAPTER XX.

GILBERT ON THE ROAD TO CHESTER.

BEING now fully prepared to undertake his journey to Chester, Gilbert remembered his promise to Alfred Barton. As the subject had not again been mentioned between them, — probably owing to the excitement produced by Sandy Flash's visit to Kennett Square, and its consequences, — he felt bound to inform Barton of his speedy departure, and to renew his offer of service.

He found the latter in the field, assisting Giles, who was hauling home the sheaves of corn-fodder in a harvest-wagon. The first meeting of the two men did not seem to be quite agreeable to either. Gilbert's suspicions had been aroused, although he could give them no definite form, and Barton shrank from any reference to what had now become a very sore topic.

"Giles," said the latter, after a moment of evident embarrassment, "I guess you may drive home with that load, and pitch it off; I'll wait for you here."

When the rustling wain had reached a convenient distance, Gilbert began, —

"I only wanted to say that I'm going to Chester to-morrow."

"Oh, yes!" Barton exclaimed, "about that money? I suppose you want all o' yours?"

"It's as I expected. But you said you could borrow elsewhere, and send it by me."

"The fact is," said Barton, "that I've both borrowed and sent. I'm obliged to you, all the same, Gilbert; the

will 's as good as the deed, you know ; but I got the money from — well, from a friend, who was about going down on his own business, and so that stone killed both my birds. I ought to ha' sent you word, by rights."

"Is your *friend*," Gilbert asked, "a safe and trusty man?"

"Safe enough, I guess — a little wild, at times, maybe ; but he 's not such a fool as to lose what he 'd never have a chance of getting again."

"Then," said Gilbert, "it 's hardly likely that he 's the same friend you took such a fancy to, at the Hammer-and-Trowel, last spring?"

Alfred Barton started as if he had been shot, and a deep color spread over his face. His lower jaw slackened and his eyes moved uneasily from side to side.

"Who — who do you mean?" he stammered.

The more evident his embarrassment became, the more Gilbert was confirmed in his suspicion that there was some secret understanding between the two men. The thing seemed incredible, but the same point, he remembered had occurred to Martha Deane's mind, when she so readily explained the other circumstances.

"Barton," he said, sternly, "you know very well whom I mean. What became of your friend Fortune? Did n't you see him at the tavern, last Monday morning?"

"Y-yes — oh, yes! I know who he is *now*, the damned scoundrel! I'd give a hundred dollars to see him dance upon nothing!"

He clenched his fists, and uttered a number of other oaths, which need not be repeated. His rage seemed so real that Gilbert was again staggered. Looking at the heavy, vulgar face before him, — the small, restless eyes, the large sensuous mouth, the forehead whose very extent, in contradiction to ordinary laws, expressed imbecility rather than intellect, it was impossible to associate great cunning and shrewdness with such a physiognomy. Every line, at

that moment, expressed pain and exasperation. But Gilbert felt bound to go a step further.

"Barton," he said, "did n't you know who Fortune was, on that day?"

"N-no — no! On that *day* — no! Blast me if I did!"

"Not before you left him?"

"Well, I'll admit that a suspicion of it came to me at the very last moment — too late to be of any use. But come, damme! that's all over, and what's the good o' talking? *You* tried your best to catch the fellow, too, but he was too much for you! 'T is n't such an easy job, eh?"

This sort of swagger was Alfred Barton's only refuge, when he was driven into a corner. Though some color still lingered in his face, he spread his shoulders with a bold, almost defiant air, and met Gilbert's eye with a steady gaze. The latter was not prepared to carry his examination further, although he was still far from being satisfied.

"Come, come, Gilbert!" Barton presently resumed, "I mean no offence. You showed yourself to be true blue, and you led the hunt as well as any man could ha' done; but the very thought o' the fellow makes me mad, and I'll know no peace till he's strung up. If I was your age, now! A man seems to lose his spirit as he gets on in years, and I'm only sorry you were n't made captain at the start, instead o' me. You *shall* be, from this time on; I won't take it again!"

"One thing I'll promise you," said Gilbert, with a meaning look, "that I won't let him walk into the bar-room of the Unicorn, without hindrance."

"I'll bet you won't!" Barton exclaimed. "All I'm afraid of is, that he won't try it again."

"We'll see; this highway-robbery must have an end. I must now be going. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Gilbert; take care o' yourself!" said Barton, in a very good humor, now that the uncomfortable in-

terview was over. "And, I say," he added, "remember that I stand ready to do you a good turn, whenever I can!"

"Thank you!" responded Gilbert, as he turned Roger's head; but he said to himself, — "when all other friends fail, I may come to *you*, not sooner."

The next morning showed signs that the Indian Summer had reached its close. All night long the wind had moaned and lamented in the chimneys, and the sense of dread in the outer atmosphere crept into the house and weighed upon the slumbering inmates. There was a sound in the forest as of sobbing Dryads, waiting for the swift death and the frosty tomb. The blue haze of dreams which had overspread the land changed into an ashy, livid mist, dragging low, and clinging to the features of the landscape like a shroud to the limbs of a corpse.

The time, indeed, had come for a change. It was the end of November; and after a summer and autumn beautiful almost beyond parallel, a sudden and severe winter was generally anticipated. In this way, even the most ignorant field-hand recognized the eternal balance of Nature.

Mary Potter, although the day had arrived for which she had so long and fervently prayed, could not shake off the depressing influence of the weather. After breakfast, when Gilbert began to make preparations for the journey, she found herself so agitated that it was with difficulty she could give him the usual assistance. The money, which was mostly in silver coin, had been sewed into tight rolls, and was now to be carefully packed in the saddle-bags; the priming of the pistols was to be renewed, and the old, shrivelled covers of the holsters so greased, hammered out, and padded that they would keep the weapons dry in case of rain. Although Gilbert would reach Chester that evening, — the distance being not more than twenty-four miles, — the preparations, principally on account of his errand, were conducted with a grave and solemn sense of their importance.

When, finally, everything was in readiness,—the saddle-bags so packed that the precious rolls could not rub or jingle ; the dinner of sliced bread and pork placed over them, in a folded napkin ; the pistols, intended more for show than use, thrust into the antiquated holsters ; and all these deposited and secured on Roger's back,— Gilbert took his mother's hand, and said, —

“ Good-bye, mother ! Don't worry, now, if I should n't get back until late to-morrow evening ; I can't tell exactly how long the business will take.”

He had never looked more strong and cheerful. The tears came to Mary Potter's eyes, but she held them back by a powerful effort. All she could say—and her voice trembled in spite of herself— was, —

“ Good-bye, my boy ! Remember that I've worked, and thought, and prayed, for you alone, — and that I'd do more — I'd do *all*, if I only could ! ”

His look said “ I do not forget ! ” He sat already in the saddle, and was straightening the folds of his heavy cloak so that it might protect his knees. The wind had arisen, and the damp mist was driving down the glen, mixed with scattered drops of a coming rain-storm. As he rode slowly away, Mary Potter lifted her eyes to the dense gray of the sky, darkening from moment to moment, listened to the murmur of the wind over the wooded hills opposite, and clasped her hands with the appealing gesture which had now become habitual to her.

“ Two days more ! ” she sighed, as she entered the house, — “ two days more of fear and prayer ! Lord forgive me that I am so weak of faith — that I make myself trouble where I ought to be humble and thankful ! ”

Gilbert rode slowly, because he feared the contents of his saddle-bags would be disturbed by much jolting. Proof against wind and weather, he was not troubled by the atmospheric signs, but rather experienced a healthy glow and exhilaration of the blood as the mist grew thicker and beat

upon his face like the blown spray of a waterfall. By the time he had reached the Carson farm, the sky contracted to a low, dark arch of solid wet, in which there was no positive outline of cloud, and a dull, universal roar, shorn of all windy sharpness, hummed over the land.

From the hill behind the farm-house, whence he could overlook the bottom-lands of Redley Creek, and easily descry, on a clear day, the yellow front of Dr. Deane's house in Kennett Square, he now beheld a dim twilight chaos, wherein more and more of the distance was blotted out. Yet still some spell held up the suspended rain, and the drops that fell seemed to be only the leakage of the airy cisterns before they burst. The fields on either hand were deserted. The cattle huddled behind the stacks or crouched disconsolately in fence-corners. Here and there a farmer made haste to cut and split a supply of wood for his kitchen-fire, or mended the rude roof on which his pigs depended for shelter; but all these signs showed how soon he intended to be snugly housed, to bide out the storm.

It was a day of no uncertain promise. Gilbert confessed to himself, before he reached the Philadelphia road, that he would rather have chosen another day for the journey; yet the thought of returning was farthest from his mind. Even when the rain, having created its little pools and sluices in every hollow of the ground, took courage, and multiplied its careering drops, and when the wet gusts tore open his cloak and tugged at his dripping hat, he cheerily shook the moisture from his cheeks and eyelashes, patted Roger's streaming neck, and whistled a bar or two of an old carol.

There were pleasant hopes enough to occupy his mind, without dwelling on these slight external annoyances. He still tried to believe that his mother's release would be hastened by the independence which lay folded in his saddle-bags, and the thud of the wet leather against Roger's hide was a sound to cheer away any momentary

foreboding. Then, Martha — dear, noble girl! She was his; it was but to wait, and waiting must be easy when the end was certain. He felt, moreover, that in spite of his unexplained disgrace, he had grown in the respect of his neighbors; that his persevering integrity was beginning to bring its reward, and he thanked God very gratefully that he had been saved from adding to his name any stain of his own making.

In an hour or more the force of the wind somewhat abated, but the sky seemed to dissolve into a massy flood. The rain rushed down, not in drops, but in sheets, and in spite of his cloak, he was wet to the skin. For half an hour he was obliged to halt in the wood between Old Kennett and Chadd's Ford, and here he made the discovery that with all his care the holsters were nearly full of water. Brown streams careered down the long, meadowy hollow on his left, wherein many Hessian soldiers lay buried. There was money buried with them, the people believed, but no one cared to dig among the dead at midnight, and many a wild tale of frightened treasure-seekers recurred to his mind.

At the bottom of the long hill flowed the Brandywine, now rolling swift and turbid, level with its banks. Roger bravely breasted the flood, and after a little struggle, reached the opposite side. Then across the battle-meadow, in the teeth of the storm, along the foot of the low hill, around the brow of which the entrenchments of the American army made a clayey streak, until the ill-fated field, sown with grape-shot and bullets which the farmers turned up every spring with their furrows, lay behind him. The story of the day was familiar to him, from the narratives of scores of eye-witnesses, and he thought to himself, as he rode onward, wet, lashed by the furious rain, yet still of good cheer, — "Though the fight was lost, the cause was won."

After leaving the lovely lateral valley which stretches

eastward for two miles, at right angles to the course of the Brandywine, he entered a rougher and wilder region, more thickly wooded and deeply indented with abrupt glens. Thus far he had not met with a living soul. Chester was now not more than eight or ten miles distant, and, as nearly as he could guess, it was about two o'clock in the afternoon. With the best luck, he could barely reach his destination by nightfall, for the rain showed no signs of abating, and there were still several streams to be crossed.

His blood leaped no more so nimbly along his veins; the continued exposure had at last chilled and benumbed him. Letting the reins fall upon Roger's neck, he folded himself closely in his wet cloak, and bore the weather with a grim, patient endurance. The road dropped into a rough glen, crossed a stony brook, and then wound along the side of a thickly wooded hill. On his right the bank had been cut away like a wall; on the left a steep slope of tangled thicket descended to the stream.

One moment, Gilbert knew that he was riding along this road, Roger pressing close to the bank for shelter from the wind and rain; the next, there was a swift and tremendous grip on his collar, Roger slid from under him, and he was hurled backwards, with great force, upon the ground. Yet even in the act of falling, he seemed to be conscious that a figure sprang down upon the road from the bank above.

It was some seconds before the shock, which sent a crash through his brain and a thousand fiery sparkles into his eyes, passed away. Then a voice, keen, sharp, and determined, which it seemed that he knew, exclaimed,—

“Damn the beast! I'll have to shoot him.”

Lifting his head with some difficulty, for he felt weak and giddy, and propping himself on his arm, he saw Sandy Flash in the road, three or four paces off, fronting Roger, who had whirled around, and with levelled ears and fiery eyes, seemed to be meditating an attack.

The robber wore a short overcoat, made entirely of musk-rat skins, which completely protected the arms in his belt. He had a large hunting-knife in his left hand, and appeared to be feeling with his right for the stock of a pistol. It seemed to Gilbert that nothing but the singular force of his eye held back the horse from rushing upon him.

"Keep as you are, young man!" he cried, without turning his head, "or a bullet goes into your horse's brain. I know the beast, and don't want to see him slaughtered. If *you* don't, order him to be quiet!"

Gilbert, although he knew every trait of the noble animal's nature better than those of many a human acquaintance, was both surprised and touched at the instinct with which he had recognized an enemy, and the fierce courage with which he stood on the defensive. In that moment of bewilderment, he thought only of Roger, whose life hung by a thread, which his silence would instantly snap. He might have seen — had there been time for reflection — that nothing would have been gained, in any case, by the animal's death; for, stunned and unarmed as he was, he was no match for the powerful, wary highway-man.

Obeying the feeling which entirely possessed him, he cried, — "Roger! Roger, old boy!"

The horse neighed a shrill, glad neigh of recognition, and pricked up his ears. Sandy Flash stood motionless; he had let go of his pistol, and concealed the knife in a fold of his coat.

"Quiet, Roger, quiet!" Gilbert again commanded.

The animal understood the tone, if not the words. He seemed completely reassured, and advanced a step or two nearer. With the utmost swiftness and dexterity, combined with an astonishing gentleness, — making no gesture which might excite Roger's suspicion, — Sandy Flash thrust his hand into the holsters, smiled mockingly, cut the straps

of the saddle-bags with a single movement, of his keen edged knife, tested the weight of the bags, nodded, grinned, and then, stepping aside, he allowed the horse to pass him. But he watched every motion of the head and ears, as he did so.

Roger, however, seemed to think only of his master. Bending down his head, he snorted warmly into Gilbert's pale face, and then swelled his sides with a deep breath of satisfaction. Tears of shame, grief, and rage swam in Gilbert's eyes. "Roger," he said, "I've lost everything but you!"

He staggered to his feet and leaned against the bank. The extent of his loss — the hopelessness of its recovery — the impotence of his burning desire to avenge the outrage — overwhelmed him. The highwayman still stood, a few paces off, watching him with a grim curiosity.

With a desperate effort, Gilbert turned towards him. "Sandy Flash," he cried, "do you know what you are doing?"

"I rather guess so," — and the highwayman grinned. "I've done it before, but never quite so neatly as this time."

"I've heard it said, to your credit," Gilbert continued "that, though you rob the rich, you sometimes give to the poor. This time you've robbed a poor man."

"I've only borrowed a little from one able to spare a good deal more than I've got, — and the grudge I owe him is n't paid off yet."

"It is not so!" Gilbert cried. "Every cent has been earned by my own and my mother's hard work. I was taking it to Chester, to pay off a debt upon the farm; and the loss and the disappointment will wellnigh break my mother's heart. According to your views of things, you owe me a grudge, but you are outside of the law, and I did my duty as a lawful man by trying to shoot you!"

"And I, *bein'* outside o' the law, as you say, have let you

off mighty easy, young man!" exclaimed Sandy Flash, his eyes shining angrily and his teeth glittering. "I took you for a fellow o' pluck, not for one that'd lie, even to the robber they call me! What's all this pitiful story about Barton's money?"

"Barton's money!"

"Oh — ay! You did n't agree to take some o' his money to Chester?" The mocking expression on the highwayman's face was perfectly diabolical. He slung the saddle-bags over his shoulders, and turned to leave.

Gilbert was so amazed that for a moment he knew not what to say. Sandy Flash took three strides up the road, and then sprang down into the thicket.

"It is not Barton's money!" Gilbert cried, with a last desperate appeal, — "it is mine, mine and my mother's!"

A short, insulting laugh was the only answer.

"Sandy Flash!" he cried again, raising his voice almost to a shout, as the crashing of the robber's steps through the brushwood sounded farther and farther down the glen, "Sandy Flash! You have plundered a widow's honest earnings to-day, and a curse goes with such plunder! Hark you! if never before, you are cursed from this hour forth! I call upon God, in my mother's name, to mark you!"

There was no sound in reply, except the dull, dreary hum of the wind and the steady lashing of the rain. The growing darkness of the sky told of approaching night, and the wild glen, bleak enough before, was now a scene of utter and hopeless desolation to Gilbert's eyes. He was almost unmanned, not only by the cruel loss, but also by the stinging sense of outrage which it had left behind. A mixed feeling of wretched despondency and shame filled his heart, as he leaned, chill, weary, and still weak from the shock of his fall, upon Roger's neck.

The faithful animal turned his head from time to time, as if to question his master's unusual demeanor. There

was a look of almost human sympathy in his large eyes, he was hungry and restless, yet would not move until the word of command had been given.

"Poor fellow!" said Gilbert, patting his cheek, "we've both fared ill to-day. But you must n't suffer any longer for my sake."

He then mounted and rode onward through the storm.

CHAPTER XXI.

ROGER REPAYS HIS MASTER.

A MILE or more beyond the spot where Gilbert Potter had been waylaid, there was a lonely tavern, called the "Drovers' Inn." Here he dismounted, more for his horse's sake than his own, although he was sore, weary, and sick of heart. After having carefully groomed Roger with his own hands, and commended him to the special attentions of the ostler, he entered the warm public room, wherein three or four storm-bound drovers were gathered around the roaring fire of hickory logs.

The men kindly made way for the pale, dripping, wretched-looking stranger; and the landlord, with a shrewd glance and a suggestion of "Something hot, I reckon?" began mixing a compound proper for the occasion. Laying aside his wet cloak, which was sent to the kitchen to be more speedily dried, Gilbert presently sat in a cloud of his own steaming garments, and felt the warmth of the potent liquor in his chilly blood.

All at once, it occurred to him that the highwayman had not touched his person. There was not only some loose silver in his pockets, but Mark Deane's money-belt was still around his waist. So much, at least, was rescued, and he began to pluck up a little courage. Should he continue his journey to Chester, explain the misfortune to the holder of his mortgage, and give notice to the County Sheriff of this new act of robbery? Then the thought came into his mind that in that case he might be detained a day or two, in order to make depositions, or comply with some unknown

legal form. In the mean time the news would spread over the country, no doubt with many exaggerations, and might possibly reach Kennett—even the ears of his mother. That reflection decided his course. She must first hear the truth from his mouth; he would try to give her cheer and encouragement, though he felt none himself; then, calling his friends together, he would hunt Sandy Flash like a wild beast until they had tracked him to his lair.

“Unlucky weather for ye, it seems?” remarked the curious landlord, who, seated in a corner of the fireplace, had for full ten minutes been watching Gilbert’s knitted brows, gloomy, brooding eyes, and compressed lips.

“Weather?” he exclaimed, bitterly. “It’s not the weather. Landlord, will you have a chance of sending to Chester to-morrow?”

“I’m going, if it clears up,” said one of the drovers.

“Then, my friend,” Gilbert continued, “will you take a letter from me to the Sheriff?”

“If it’s nothing out of the way,” the man replied.

“It’s in the proper course of law—if there is any law to protect us. Not a mile and a half from here, landlord, I have been waylaid and robbed on the public road!”

There was a general exclamation of surprise, and Gilbert’s story, which he had suddenly decided to relate, in order that the people of the neighborhood might be put upon their guard, was listened to with an interest only less than the terror which it inspired. The landlady rushed into the bar-room, followed by the red-faced kitchen wench, and both interrupted the recital with cries of “Dear, dear!” and “Lord save us!” The landlord, meanwhile, had prepared another tumbler of hot and hot, and brought it forward, saying,—

“You need it, the Lord knows, and it shall cost you nothing.”

“What I most need now,” Gilbert said, “is pen, ink, and paper, to write out my account. Then I suppose you

can get me up a cold check,* for I must start homewards soon."

"Not 'a cold check' after all that drenching and mishandling!" the landlord exclaimed. "We'll have a hot supper in half an hour, and you shall stay, and welcome. Wife, bring down one of Liddy's pens, the schoolmaster made for her, and put a little vinegar into th' ink-bottle; it's most dried up!"

In a few minutes the necessary materials for a letter, all of the rudest kind, were supplied, and the landlord and drovers hovered around as Gilbert began to write, assisting him with the most extraordinary suggestions.

"I'd threaten," said a drover, "to write straight to General Washington, unless they promise to catch the scoundrel in no time!"

"And don't forget the knife and pistol!" cried the landlord.

"And say the Tory farmers' houses ought to be searched!"

"And give his marks, to a hair!"

Amid all this confusion, Gilbert managed to write a brief, but sufficiently circumstantial account of the robbery, calling upon the County authorities to do their part in effecting the capture of Sandy Flash. He offered his services and those of the Kennett troop, announcing that he should immediately start upon the hunt, and expected to be seconded by the law.

When the letter had been sealed and addressed, the drovers—some of whom carried money with them, and had agreed to travel in company, for better protection—eagerly took charge of it, promising to back the delivery with very energetic demands for assistance.

Night had fallen, and the rain fell with it, in renewed torrents. The dreary, universal hum of the storm rose again, making all accidental sounds of life impertinent, in

* A local term, in use at the time, signifying a "lunch."

contrast with its deep, tremendous monotone. The windows shivered, the walls sweat and streamed, and the wild wet blew in under the doors, as if besieging that refuge of warm, red fire-light.

"This beats the Lammas flood o' '68," said the landlord, as he led the way to supper. "I was a young man at the time, and remember it well. Half the dams on Brandy wine went that night."

After a bountiful meal, Gilbert completely dried his garments and prepared to set out on his return, resisting the kindly persuasion of the host and hostess that he should stay all night. A restless, feverish energy filled his frame. He felt that he could not sleep, that to wait idly would be simple misery, and that only in motion towards the set aim of his fierce, excited desires, could he bear his disappointment and shame. But the rain still came down with a volume which threatened soon to exhaust the cisterns of the air, and in that hope he compelled himself to wait a little.

Towards nine o'clock the great deluge seemed to slacken. The wind arose, and there were signs of its shifting, ere-long, to the northwest, which would bring clear weather in a few hours. The night was dark, but not pitchy; a dull phosphoric gleam overspread the under surface of the sky. The woods were full of noises, and every gully at the roadside gave token, by its stony rattle, of the rain-born streams.

With his face towards home and his back to the storm, Gilbert rode into the night. The highway was but a streak of less palpable darkness; the hills on either hand scarcely detached themselves from the low, black ceiling of sky behind them. Sometimes the light of a farm-house window sparkled faintly, like a glow-worm, but whether far or near, he could not tell; he only knew how blest must be the owner, sitting with wife and children around his secure hearthstone,—how wretched his own life, cast adrift in the darkness, — wife, home, and future, things of doubt!

He had lost more than money ; and his wretchedness will not seem unmanly when we remember the steady strain and struggle of his previous life. As there is nothing more stimulating to human patience, and courage, and energy, than the certain prospect of relief at the end, so there is nothing more depressing than to see that relief suddenly snatched away, and the same round of toil thrust again under one's feet ! This is the fate of Tantalus and Sisyphus in one.

Not alone the money ; a year, or two years, of labor would no doubt replace what he had lost. But he had seen, in imagination, his mother's feverish anxiety at an end ; household help procured, to lighten her over-heavy toil ; the possibility of her release from some terrible obligation brought nearer, as he hoped and trusted, and with it the strongest barrier broken down which rose between him and Martha Deane. All these things which he had, as it were, held in his hand, had been stolen from him, and the loss was bitter because it struck down to the roots of the sweetest and strongest fibres of his heart. The night veiled his face, but if some hotter drops than those of the storm were shaken from his cheek, they left no stain upon his manhood.

The sense of outrage, of personal indignity, which no man can appreciate who has not himself been violently plundered, added its sting to his miserable mood. He thirsted to avenge the wrong ; Barton's words involuntarily came back to him, — " I 'll know no peace till the villain has been strung up ! " Barton ! How came Sandy Flash to know that Barton intended to send money by him ? Had not Barton himself declared that the matter should be kept secret ? Was there some complicity between the latter and Sandy Flash ? Yet, on the other hand, it seemed that the highwayman believed that he was robbing Gilbert of Barton's money. Here was an enigma which he could not solve.

All at once, a hideous solution presented itself. Was it possible that Barton's money was to be only *apparently* stolen — in reality returned to him privately, afterwards? Possibly the rest of the plunder divided between the two confederates? Gilbert was not in a charitable mood; the human race was much more depraved, in his view, than twelve hours before; and the inference which he would have rejected as monstrous, that very morning, now assumed a possible existence. One thing, at least, was certain; he would exact an explanation, and if none should be furnished, he would make public the evidence in his hands.

The black, dreary night seemed interminable. He could only guess, here and there, at a landmark, and was forced to rely more upon Roger's instinct of the road than upon the guidance of his senses. Towards midnight, as he judged, by the solitary crow of a cock, the rain almost entirely ceased. The wind began to blow, sharp and keen, and the hard vault of the sky to lift a little. He fancied that the hills on his right had fallen away, and that the horizon was suddenly depressed towards the north. Roger's feet began to splash in constantly deepening water, and presently a roar, distinct from that of the wind, filled the air.

It was the Brandywine. The stream had overflowed its broad meadow-bottoms, and was running high and fierce beyond its main channel. The turbid waters made a dim, dusky gleam around him; soon the fences disappeared, and the flood reached to his horse's belly. But he knew that the ford could be distinguished by the break in the fringe of timber; moreover, that the creek-bank was a little higher than the meadows behind it, and so far, at least, he might venture. The ford was not more than twenty yards across, and he could trust Roger to swim that distance.

The faithful animal pressed bravely on, but Gilbert soon noticed that he seemed at fault. The swift water had

forced him out of the road, and he stopped, from time to time, as if anxious and uneasy. The timber could now be discerned, only a short distance in advance, and in a few minutes they would gain the bank.

What was that? A strange rustling, hissing sound, as of cattle trampling through dry reeds, — a sound which quivered and shook, even in the breath of the hurrying wind! Roger snorted, stood still, and trembled in every limb; and a sensation of awe and terror struck a chill through Gilbert's heart. The sound drew swiftly nearer, and became a wild, seething roar, filling the whole breadth of the valley.

"Great God!" cried Gilbert, "the dam! — the dam has given way!" He turned Roger's head, gave him the rein, struck, spurred, cheered, and shouted. The brave beast struggled through the impeding flood, but the advance wave of the coming inundation already touched his side. He staggered; a line of churning foam bore down upon them, the terrible roar was all around and over them, and horse and rider were whirled away.

What happened during the first few seconds, Gilbert could never distinctly recall. Now they were whelmed in the water, now riding its careering tide, torn through the tops of brushwood, jostled by floating logs and timbers of the dam-breast, but always, as it seemed, remorselessly held in the heart of the tumult and the ruin.

He saw, at last, that they had fallen behind the furious onset of the flood, but Roger was still swimming with it, desperately throwing up his head from time to time, and snorting the water from his nostrils. All his efforts to gain a foothold failed; his strength was nearly spent, and unless some help should come in a few minutes, it would come in vain. And in the darkness, and the rapidity with which they were borne along, how should help come?

All at once, Roger's course stopped. He became an obstacle to the flood, which pressed him against some other

obstacle below, and rushed over horse and rider. Thrusting out his hand, Gilbert felt the rough bark of a tree. Leaning towards it and clasping the log in his arms, he drew himself from the saddle, while Roger, freed from his burden, struggled into the current and instantly disappeared.

As nearly as Gilbert could ascertain, several timbers, thrown over each other, had lodged, probably upon a rocky islet in the stream, the uppermost one projecting slantingly out of the flood. It required all his strength to resist the current which sucked, and whirled, and tugged at his body, and to climb high enough to escape its force, without overbalancing his support. At last, though still half immersed, he found himself comparatively safe for a time, yet as far as ever from a final rescue.

He must await the dawn, and an eternity of endurance lay in those few hours. Meantime, perhaps, the creek would fall, for the rain had ceased, and there were outlines of moving cloud in the sky. It was the night which made his situation so terrible, by concealing the chances of escape. At first, he thought most of Roger. Was his brave horse drowned, or had he safely gained the bank below? Then, as the desperate moments went by, and the chill of exposure and the fatigue of exertion began to creep over him, his mind reverted, with a bitter sweetness, a mixture of bliss and agony, to the two beloved women to whom his life belonged, — the life which, alas! he could not now call his own, to give.

He tried to fix his thoughts on Death, to commend his soul to Divine Mercy; but every prayer shaped itself into an appeal that he might once more see the dear faces and hear the dear voices. In the great shadow of the fate which hung over him, the loss of his property became as dust in the balance, and his recent despair smote him with shame. He no longer fiercely protested against the injuries of fortune, but entreated pardon and pity for the sake of his love.

The clouds rolled into distincter masses, and the north-west wind still hunted them across the sky, until there came, first a tiny rift for a star, then a gap for a whole constellation, and finally a broad burst of moonlight. Gilbert now saw that the timber to which he clung was lodged nearly in the centre of the channel, as the water swept with equal force on either side of him. Beyond the banks there was a wooded hill on the left; on the right an overflowed meadow. He was too weak and benumbed to trust himself to the flood, but he imagined that it was beginning to subside, and therein lay his only hope.

Yet a new danger now assailed him, from the increasing cold. There was already a sting of frost, a breath of ice, in the wind. In another hour the sky was nearly swept bare of clouds, and he could note the lapse of the night by the sinking of the moon. But he was by this time hardly in a condition to note anything more. He had thrown himself, face downwards, on the top of the log, his arms mechanically clasping it, while his mind sank into a state of torpid, passive suffering, growing nearer to the dreamy indifference which precedes death. His cloak had been torn away in the first rush of the inundation, and the wet coat began to stiffen in the wind, from the ice gathering over it.

The moon was low in the west, and there was a pale glimmer of the coming dawn in the sky, when Gilbert Potter suddenly raised his head. Above the noise of the water and the whistle of the wind, he heard a familiar sound,—the shrill, sharp neigh of a horse. Lifting himself, with great exertion, to a sitting posture, he saw two men, or horseback, in the flooded meadow, a little below him. They stopped, seemed to consult, and presently drew nearer.

Gilbert tried to shout, but the muscles of his throat were stiff, and his lungs refused to act. The horse neighed again. This time there was no mistake; it was Roger that

he heard! Voice came to him, and he cried aloud, — a hoarse, strange, unnatural cry.

The horsemen heard it, and rapidly pushed up the bank, until they reached a point directly opposite to him. The prospect of escape brought a thrill of life to his frame; he looked around and saw that the flood had indeed fallen.

"We have no rope," he heard one of the men say. "How shall we reach him?"

"There is no time to get one, now," the other answered. "My horse is stronger than yours. I'll go into the creek just below, where it's broader and not so deep, and work my way up to him."

"But one horse can't carry both."

"His will follow, be sure, when it sees me."

As the last speaker moved away, Gilbert saw a led horse plunging through the water, beside the other. It was a difficult and dangerous undertaking. The horseman and the loose horse entered the main stream below, where its divided channel met and broadened, but it was still above the saddle-girths, and very swift. Sometimes the animals plunged, losing their foothold; nevertheless, they gallantly breasted the current, and inch by inch worked their way to a point about six feet below Gilbert. It seemed impossible to approach nearer.

"Can you swim?" asked the man.

Gilbert shook his head. "Throw me the end of Roger's bridle!" he then cried.

The man unbuckled the bridle and threw it, keeping the end of the rein in his hand. Gilbert tried to grasp it, but his hands were too numb. He managed, however, to get one arm and his head through the opening, and relaxed his hold on the log.

A plunge, and the man had him by the collar. He felt himself lifted by a strong arm and laid across Roger's saddle. With his failing strength and stiff limbs, it was no slight task to get into place, and the return, though less

laborious to the horses, was equally dangerous, because Gilbert was scarcely able to support himself without help.

"You're safe now," said the man, when they reached the bank, "but it's a downright mercy of God that you're alive!"

The other horseman joined them, and they rode slowly across the flooded meadow. They had both thrown their cloaks around Gilbert, and carefully steadied him in the saddle, one on each side. He was too much exhausted to ask how they had found him, or whither they were taking him, — too numb for curiosity, almost for gratitude.

"Here's your saviour!" said one of the men, patting Roger's shoulder. "It was all along of him that we found you. Want to know how? Well — about three o'clock it was, maybe a little earlier, maybe a little later, my wife woke me up. 'Do you hear that?' she says. I listened and heard a horse in the lane before the door, neighing, — I can't tell you exactly how it was, — like as if he'd call up the house. 'T was rather queer, I thought, so I got up and looked out of window, and it seemed to me he had a saddle on. He stamped, and pawed, and then he gave another yell, and stamped again. Says I to my wife, 'There's something wrong here,' and I dressed and went out. When he saw me, he acted the strangest you ever saw; thinks I, if ever an animal wanted to speak, that animal does. When I tried to catch him, he shot off, run down the lane a bit, and then came back as strangely acting as ever. I went into the house and woke up my brother, here, and we saddled our horses and started. Away went yours ahead, stopping every minute to look round and see if we followed. When we came to the water, I kind o' hesitated, but 't was no use; the horse would have us go on, and on, till we found you. I never heard tell of the like of it, in my born days!"

Gilbert did not speak, but two large tears slowly gath-

ered in his eyes, and rolled down his cheeks. The men saw his emotion, and respected it.

In the light of the cold, keen dawn, they reached a snug farm-house, a mile from the Brandywine. The men lifted Gilbert from the saddle, and would have carried him immediately into the house, but he first leaned upon Roger's neck, took the faithful creature's head in his arms, and kissed it.

The good housewife was already up, and anxiously awaiting the return of her husband and his brother. A cheery fire crackled on the hearth, and the coffee-pot was simmering beside it. When Gilbert had been partially revived by the warmth, the men conducted him into an adjoining bed-room, undressed him, and rubbed his limbs with whiskey. Then, a large bowl of coffee having been administered, he was placed in bed, covered with half a dozen blankets, and the curtains were drawn over the windows. In a few minutes he was plunged in a slumber almost as profound as that of the death from which he had been so miraculously delivered.

It was two hours past noon when he awoke, and he no sooner fully comprehended the situation and learned how the time had sped, than he insisted on rising, although still sore, weak, and feverish. The good farmer's wife had kept a huge portion of dinner hot before the fire, and he knew that without compelling a show of appetite, he would not be considered sufficiently recovered to leave. He had but one desire, — to return home. So recently plucked from the jaws of Death, his life still seemed to be an uncertain possession.

Finally Roger was led forth, quiet and submissive as of old, — having forgotten his good deed as soon as it had been accomplished, — and Gilbert, wrapped in the farmer's cloak, retraced his way to the main road. As he looked across the meadow, which told of the inundation in its sweep of bent, muddy grass, and saw, between the creek-

bank trees, the lodged timber to which he had clung, the recollection of the night impressed him like a frightful dream. It was a bright, sharp, wintry day, — the most violent contrast to that which had preceded it. The hills on either side, whose outlines he could barely guess in the darkness, now stood out from the air with a hard, painful distinctness; the sky was an arch of cold, steel-tinted crystal; and the north wind blew with a shrill, endless whistle through the naked woods.

As he climbed the long hill west of Chadd's Ford, Gilbert noticed how the meadow on his right had been torn by the flood gathered from the fields above. In one place a Hessian skull had been snapped from the buried skeleton, and was rolled to light, among the mud and pebbles. Not far off, something was moving among the bushes, and he involuntarily drew rein.

The form stopped, appeared to crouch down for a moment, then suddenly rose and strode forth upon the grass. It was a woman, wearing a man's flannel jacket, and carrying a long, pointed staff in her hand. As she approached with rapid strides, he recognized Deb. Smith.

"Deborah!" he cried, "what are you doing here?"

She set her pole to the ground and vaulted over the high picket-fence, like an athlete.

"Well," she said, "if I 'd ha' been shy o' you, Mr. Gilbert, you would n't ha' seen me. I'm not one of them as goes prowlin' around among dead bodies' bones at midnight; what I want, I looks for in the daytime."

"Bones?" he asked. "You're surely not digging up the Hessians?"

"Not exackly; but, you see, the rain's turned out a few, and some on 'em, folks says, was buried with lots o' goold platted up in their pig-tails. I know o' one man that dug up two or three to git their teeth, (to sell to the tooth-doctors, you know,) and when he took hold o' the pig-tail to lift the head by, the hair come off in his hand, and out

rattled ten good goolden guineas. Now, if any money 's washed out, there 's no harm in a body 's pickin' of it up, as I see."

"What luck have you had?" asked Gilbert.

"Nothin' to speak of; a few buttons, and a thing or two. But I say, Mr. Gilbert, what luck ha' *you* had?" She had been keenly and curiously inspecting his face.

"Deborah!" he exclaimed, "you 're a false prophet! "You told me that, whatever happened, I was safe from Sandy Flash."

"Eh?"

There was a shrill tone of surprise and curiosity in this exclamation.

"You ought to know Sandy Flash better, before you prophesy in his name," Gilbert repeated, in a stern voice.

"Oh, Mr. Gilbert, tell me what you mean?" She grasped his leg with one hand, while she twisted the other in Roger's mane, as if to hold both horse and rider until the words were explained.

Thereupon he related to her in a brief, fierce way, all that had befallen him. Her face grew red and her eyes flashed; she shook her fist and swore under her breath, from time to time, while he spoke.

"You 'll be righted, Mr. Gilbert!" she then cried, "you 'll be righted, never fear! Leave it to me! Have n't I always kep' my word to you? You 're believin' I lied the last time, and no wonder; but I 'll prove the truth o' my words yet — may the Devil git my soul, if I don't!"

"Don't think that I blame you, Deborah," he said. "You were too sure of my good luck, because you wished me to have it — that 's all."

"Thank ye for that! But it is n't enough for me. When I promise a thing, I have power to keep my promise. Ax me no more questions; bide quiet awhile, and if the money is n't back in your pocket by New-Year, I give ye leave to curse me, and kick me, and spit upon me!"

Gilbert smiled sadly and incredulously, and rode onward. He made haste to reach home, for a dull pain began to throb in his head, and chill shudders ran over his body. He longed to have the worst over which yet awaited him, and gain a little rest for body, brain, and heart.

CHAPTER XXII.

MARTHA DEANE TAKES A RESOLUTION.

MARY POTTER had scarcely slept during the night of her son's absence. A painful unrest, such as she never remembered to have felt before, took complete possession of her. Whenever the monotony of the drenching rain outside lulled her into slumber for a few minutes, she was sure to start up in bed with a vague, singular impression that some one had called her name. After midnight, when the storm fell, the shrill wailing of the rising wind seemed to forebode disaster. Although she believed Gilbert to be safely housed in Chester, the fact constantly slipped from her memory, and she shuddered at every change in the wild weather as if he were really exposed to it.

The next day, she counted the hours with a feverish impatience. It seemed like tempting Providence, but she determined to surprise her son with a supper of unusual luxury for their simple habits, after so important and so toilsome a journey. Sam had killed a fowl; it was picked and dressed, but she had not courage to put it into the pot, until the fortune of the day had been assured.

Towards sunset she saw, through the back-kitchen-window, a horseman approaching from the direction of Carson's. It seemed to be Roger, but could that rider, in the faded brown cloak, be Gilbert? His cloak was blue; he always rode with his head erect, not hanging like this man's, whose features she could not see. Opposite the house, he lifted his head—it *was* Gilbert, but how old and haggard was his face!

She met him at the gate. His cheeks were suddenly flushed, his eyes bright, and the smile with which he looked at her seemed to be joyous; yet it gave her a sense of pain and terror.

"Oh, Gilbert!" she cried; "what has happened?"

He slid slowly and wearily off the horse, whose neck he fondled a moment before answering her.

"Mother," he said at last, "you have to thank Roger that I am here to-night. I have come back to you from the gates of death; will you be satisfied with that for a while?"

"I don't understand you, my boy! You frighten me; have n't you been at Chester?"

"No," he answered, "there was no use of going."

A presentiment of the truth came to her, but before she could question him further, he spoke again.

"Mother, let us go into the house. I'm cold and tired; I want to sit in your old rocking-chair, where I can rest my head. Then I'll tell you everything; I wish I had an easier task!"

She noticed that his steps were weak and slow, felt that his hands were like ice, and saw his blue lips and chattering teeth. She removed the strange cloak, placed her chair in front of the fire, seated him in it, and then knelt upon the floor to draw off his stiff, sodden top-boots. He was passive as a child in her hands. Her care for him overcame all other dread, and not until she had placed his feet upon a stool, in the full warmth of the blaze, given him a glass of hot wine and lavender, and placed a pillow under his head, did she sit down at his side to hear the story.

"I thought of this, last night," he said, with a faint smile; "not that I ever expected to see it. The man was right; it's a mercy of God that I ever got out alive!"

"Then be grateful to God, my boy!" she replied, "and let me be grateful, too. It will balance misfortune, — for that there is misfortune in store for us. I see plainly."

Gilbert then spoke. The narrative was long and painful, and he told it wearily and brokenly, yet with entire truth, disguising nothing of the evil that had come upon them. His mother sat beside him, pale, stony, stifling the sobs that rose in her throat, until he reached the period of his marvellous rescue, when she bent her head upon his arm and wept aloud.

"That's all, mother!" he said at the close; "it's hard to bear, but I'm more troubled on your account than on my own."

"Oh, I feared we were over-sure!" she cried. "I claimed payment before it was ready. The Lord chooses His own time, and punishes them that can't wait for His ways to be manifest! It's terribly hard; and yet, while His left hand smites, His right hand gives mercy! He might ha' taken you, my boy, but He makes a miracle to save you for me!"

When she had outwept her passionate tumult of feeling, she grew composed and serene. "Have n't I yet learned to be patient, in all these years?" she said. "Have n't I sworn to work out with open eyes the work I took in blindness? And after waiting twenty-five years, am I to murmur at another year or two? No, Gilbert! It's to be done; I *will* deserve my justice! Keep your courage, my boy; be brave and patient, and the sight of you will hold me from breaking down!"

She arose, felt his hands and feet, set his pillow aright, and then stooped and kissed him. His chills had ceased; a feeling of heavy, helpless languor crept over him.

"Let Sam see to Roger, mother!" he murmured. "Tell him not to spare the oats."

"I'd feed him with my own hands, Gilbert, if I could leave you. I'd put fine wheat-bread into his manger and wrap him in blankets off my own bed! To think that Roger, — that I did n't want you to buy, — Lord forgive me, I was advising your own death!"

It was fortunate for Mary Potter that she saw a mysterious Providence, which, to her mind, warned and yet promised while it chastised, in all that had occurred. This feeling helped her to bear a disappointment, which would otherwise have been very grievous. The idea of an atoning ordeal, which she must endure in order to be crowned with the final justice, and so behold her life redeemed, had become rooted in her nature. To Gilbert much of this feeling was inexplicable, because he was ignorant of the circumstances which had called it into existence. But he saw that his mother was not yet hopeless, that she did not seem to consider her deliverance as materially postponed, and a glimmer of hope was added to the relief of having told his tale.

He was still feverish, dozing and muttering in uneasy dreams, as he lay back in the old rocking-chair, and Mary Potter, with Sam's help, got him to bed, after administering a potion which she was accustomed to use in all complaints, from mumps to typhus fever.

As for Roger, he stood knee-deep in clean litter, with half a bushel of oats before him.

The next morning Gilbert did not arise, and as he complained of great soreness in every part of his body, Sam was dispatched for Dr. Deane.

It was the first time this gentleman had ever been summoned to the Potter farm-house. Mary Potter felt considerable trepidation at his arrival, both on account of the awe which his imposing presence inspired, and the knowledge of her son's love for his daughter, — a fact which, she rightly conjectured, he did not suspect. As he brought his ivory-headed cane, his sleek drab broadcloth, and his herbaceous fragrance into the kitchen, she was almost overpowered.

"How is thy son ailing?" he asked. "He always seemed to me to be a very healthy young man."

She described the symptoms with a conscientious minuteness.

"How was it brought on?" he asked again.

She had not intended to relate the whole story, but only so much of it as was necessary for the Doctor's purposes; but the commencement excited his curiosity, and he knew so skilfully how to draw one word after another, suggesting further explanations without directly asking them, that Mary Potter was led on and on, until she had communicated all the particulars of her son's misfortune.

"This is a wonderful tale thee tells me," said the Doctor — "wonderful! Sandy Flash, no doubt, has reason to remember thy son, who, I'm told, faced him very boldly on Second-day morning. It is really time the country was aroused; we shall hardly be safe in our own houses. And all night in the Brandywine flood — I don't wonder thy son is unwell. Let me go up to him."

Dr. Deane's prescriptions usually conformed to the practice of his day, — bleeding and big doses, — and he would undoubtedly have applied both of these in Gilbert's case, but for the latter's great anxiety to be in the saddle and on the hunt of his enemy. He stoutly refused to be bled, and the Doctor had learned, from long observation, that patients of a certain class must be humored rather than coerced. So he administered a double dose of Dover's Powders, and prohibited the drinking of cold water. His report was, on the whole, reassuring to Mary Potter. Provided his directions were strictly followed, he said, her son would be up in two or three days; but there *might* be a turn for the worse, as the shock to the system had been very great, and she ought to have assistance.

"There's no one I can call upon," said she, "without it's Betsy Lavender, and I must ask you to tell her for me, if you think she can come."

"I'll oblige thee, certainly," the Doctor answered. "Betsy is with us, just now, and I don't doubt but she can spare a day or two. She may be a little headstrong in her ways, but thee'll find her a safe nurse."

It was really not necessary, as the event proved. Rest and warmth were what Gilbert most needed. But Dr Deane always exaggerated his patient's condition a little, in order that the credit of the latter's recovery might be greater. The present case was a very welcome one, not only because it enabled him to recite a most astonishing narrative at second-hand, but also because it suggested a condition far more dangerous than that which the patient actually suffered. He was the first person to bear the news to Kennett Square, where it threw the village into a state of great excitement, which rapidly spread over the neighborhood.

He related it at his own tea-table that evening, to Martha and Miss Betsy Lavender. The former could with difficulty conceal her agitation; she turned red and pale, until the Doctor finally remarked, —

“Why, child, thee need n't be so frightened.”

“Never mind!” exclaimed Miss Betsy, promptly coming to the rescue, “it's enough to frighten anybody. It fairly makes me shiver in my shoes. If Alf. Barton had ha' done his dooty like a man, this would n't ha' happened!”

“I've no doubt Alfred did the best he could, under the circumstances,” the Doctor sternly remarked.

“Fiddle-de-dee!” was Miss Betsy's contemptuous answer. “He's no more gizzard than a rabbit. But that's neither here nor there; Mary Potter wants me to go down and help, and go I will!”

“Yes, I think thee might as well go down to-morrow morning, though I'm in hopes the young man may be better, if he minds my directions,” said the Doctor.

“To-morrow mornin'? Why not next week? When help's wanted, give it *right away*; don't let the grass grow under your feet, say I! Good luck that I gev up Mendenhall's home-comin' over t' the Lion, or I would n't ha' been here; so another cup o' tea, Martha, and I'm off!”

Martha left the table at the same time, and followed Miss Betsy up-stairs. Her eyes were full of tears, but she did not tremble, and her voice came firm and clear.

"I am going with you," she said.

Miss Lavender whirled around and looked at her a minute, without saying a word.

"I see you mean it, child. Don't think me hard or cruel, for I know your feelin's as well as if they was mine; but all the same, I've got to look ahead, and back'ards, and on this side and that, and so lookin', and so judgin', accordin' to my light, which a'n't all tied up in a napkin, what I've got to say is, and ag'in don't think me hard, it won't do!"

"Betsy," Martha Deane persisted, "a misfortune like this brings my duty with it. Besides, he may be in great danger; he may have got his death," —

"Don't begin talkin' that way," Miss Lavender interrupted, "or you'll put me out o' patience. I'll say that for your father, he's always mortal concerned for a bad case, Gilbert Potter or not; and I can mostly tell the heft of a sickness by the way he talks about it, — so that's settled; and as to dooties, it's very well and right, I don't deny it, but never mind, all the same, I said before, the whole thing's a snarl, and I say it ag'in, and unless you've got the end o' the ravellin's in your hand, the harder you pull, the wuss you'll make it!"

There was good sense in these words, and Martha Deane felt it. Her resolution began to waver, in spite of the tender instinct which told her that Gilbert Potter now needed precisely the help and encouragement which she alone could give.

"Oh, Betsy," she murmured, her tears falling without restraint, "it's hard for me to seem so strange to him, at such a time!"

"Yes," answered the spinster, setting her comb tight with a fierce thrust, "it's hard every one of us can't have our own ways in this world! But don't take on now, Mar-

tha dear; we only have your father's word, and not to be called a friend's, but *I'll* see how the land lays, and to-morrow evenin', or next day at th' outside, you'll know everything fair and square. Neither you nor Gilbert is inclined to do things rash, and what you *both* agree on, after a proper understandin', I guess 'll be pretty nigh right. There! where's my knittin'-basket?"

Miss Lavender trudged off, utterly fearless of the night walk of two miles, down the lonely road. In less than an hour she knocked at the door of the farm-house, and was received with open arms by Mary Potter. Gilbert had slept the greater part of the day, but was now awake, and so restless, from the desire to leave his bed, that his mother could with difficulty restrain him.

"Set down and rest yourself, Mary!" Miss Betsy exclaimed. "I'll go up and put him to rights."

She took a lamp and mounted to the bed-room. Gilbert, drenched in perspiration, and tossing uneasily under a huge pile of blankets, sprang up as her gaunt figure entered the door. She placed the lamp on a table, pressed him down on the pillow by main force, and covered him up to the chin.

"Martha?" he whispered, his face full of intense, piteous eagerness.

"Will you promise to lay still and sweat, as you're told to do?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Now let me feel your pulse. That'll do; now for your tongue! Tut, tut! the boy's not so bad. I give you my word you may get up and dress yourself to-morrow mornin', if you'll only hold out to-night. And as for thorough-stem tea, and what not, I guess you've had enough of 'em; but you can't jump out of a sick-spell into downright peartness, at one jump!"

"Martha, Martha!" Gilbert urged

"You're both of a piece, I declare! There was she,

this very night, dead set on comin' down with me, and mortal hard it was to persuade her to be reasonable!"

Miss Lavender had not a great deal to relate, but Gilbert compelled her to make up by repetition what she lacked in quantity. And at every repetition the soreness seemed to decrease in his body, and the weakness in his muscles, and hope and courage to increase in his heart.

"Tell her," he exclaimed, "it was enough that she wanted to come. That alone has put new life into me!"

"I see it has," said Miss Lavender, "and now, maybe, you've got life enough to tell me all the ups and downs o' this affair, for I can't say as I rightly understand it."

The conference was long and important. Gilbert related every circumstance of his adventure, including the mysterious allusion to Alfred Barton, which he had concealed from his mother. He was determined, as his first course, to call the volunteers together and organize a thorough hunt for the highwayman. Until that had been tried, he would postpone all further plans of action. Miss Lavender did not say much, except to encourage him in this determination. She felt that there was grave matter for reflection in what had happened. The threads of mystery seemed to increase, and she imagined it possible that they might all converge to one unknown point.

"Màry," she said, when she descended to the kitchen, "I don't see but what the boy's goin' on finely. Go to bed, you, and sleep quietly; I'll take the settle, here, and I promise you I'll go up every hour through the night, to see whether he's kicked his coverin's off."

Which promise she faithfully kept, and in the morning Gilbert came down to breakfast, a little haggard, but apparently as sound as ever. Even the Doctor, when he arrived, was slightly surprised at the rapid improvement.

"A fine constitution for medicines to work on," he remarked. "I would n't wish thee to be sick, but when thee is, it's a pleasure to see how thy system obeys the treatment."

Martha Deane, during Miss Lavender's absence, had again discussed, in her heart, her duty to Gilbert. Her conscience was hardly satisfied with the relinquishment of her first impulse. She felt that there was, there must be, something for her to do in this emergency. She knew that he had toiled, and dared, and suffered for her sake, while she had done nothing. It was not pride,—at least not the haughty quality which bears an obligation uneasily,—but rather the impulse, at once brave and tender, to stand side by side with him in the struggle, and win an equal right to the final blessing.

In the afternoon Miss Lavender returned, and her first business was to give a faithful report of Gilbert's condition and the true story of his misfortune, which she repeated, almost word for word, as it came from his lips. It did not differ materially from that which Martha had already heard, and the direction which her thoughts had taken, in the mean time, seemed to be confirmed. The gentle, steady strength of purpose that looked from her clear blue eyes, and expressed itself in the firm, sharp curve of her lip, was never more distinct than when she said, —

“Now, Betsy, all is clear to me. You were right before, and I am right now. I must see Gilbert when he calls the men together, and after that I shall know how to act.”

Three days afterwards, there was another assemblage of the Kennett Volunteers at the Unicorn Tavern. This time, however, Mark Deane was on hand, and Alfred Barton did not make his appearance. That Gilbert Potter should take the command was an understood matter. The preliminary consultation was secretly held, and when Dougherty, the Irish ostler, mixed himself, as by accident, among the troop, Gilbert sharply ordered him away. Whatever the plan of the chase was, it was not communicated to the crowd of country idlers; and there was, in consequence, some grumbling at, and a great deal of respect for, the new arrangement.

Miss Betsy Lavender had managed to speak to Gilbert before the others arrived ; therefore, after they had left, to meet the next day, equipped for a possible absence of a week, he crossed the road and entered Dr. Deane's house.

This time the two met, not so much as lovers, but rather as husband and wife might meet after long absence and escape from imminent danger. Martha Deane knew how cruel and bitter Gilbert's fate must seem to his own heart, and she resolved that all the cheer which lay in her buoyant, courageous nature should be given to him. Never did a woman more sweetly blend the tones of regret and faith, sympathy and encouragement.

"The time has come, Gilbert," she said at last, "when our love for each other must no longer be kept a secret — at least from the few who, under other circumstances, would have a right to know it. We must still wait, though no longer (remember that !) than we were already agreed to wait ; but we should betray ourselves, sooner or later, and then the secret, discovered by others, would seem to hint at a sense of shame. We shall gain respect and sympathy, and perhaps help, if we reveal it ourselves. Even if you do not take the same view, Gilbert, think of this, that it is my place to stand beside you in your hour of difficulty and trial ; that other losses, other dangers, may come, and you could not, you must not, hold me apart when my heart tells me we should be together !"

She laid her arms caressingly over his shoulders, and looked in his face. A wonderful softness and tenderness touched his pale, worn countenance. "Martha," he said, "remember that my disgrace will cover you, yet awhile."

"Gilbert !"

That one word, proud, passionate, reproachful, yet forgiving, sealed his lips.

"So be it !" he cried. "God knows, I think but of you. If I selfishly considered myself, do you think I would hold back my own honor ?"

"A poor honor," she said, **"that I sit comfortably at home and love you, while you are face to face with death!"**

Martha Deane's resolution was inflexibly taken. That same evening she went into the sitting-room, where her father was smoking a pipe before the open stove, and placed her chair opposite to his.

"Father," she said, **"thee has never asked any questions concerning Alfred Barton's visit."**

The Doctor started, and looked at her keenly, before replying. Her voice had its simple, natural tone, her manner was calm and self-possessed; yet something in her firm, erect posture and steady eye impressed him with the idea that she had determined on a full and final discussion of the question.

"No, child," he answered, after a pause. **"I saw Alfred, and he said thee was rather taken by surprise. He thought, perhaps, thee did n't rightly know thy own mind, and it would be better to wait a little. That is the chief reason why I have n't spoken to thee."**

"If Alfred Barton said that, he told thee false," said she. **"I knew my own mind, as well then as now. I said to him that nothing could ever make me his wife."**

"Martha!" the Doctor exclaimed, **"don't be hasty! If Alfred is a little older" —**

"Father!" she interrupted, **"never mention this thing again! Thee can neither give me away, nor sell me; though I am a woman, I belong to myself. Thee knows I'm not hasty in anything. It was a long time before I rightly knew my own heart; but when I did know it and found that it had chosen truly, I gave it freely, and it is gone from me forever!"**

"Martha, Martha!" cried Dr. Deane, starting from his seat, **"what does all this mean?"**

"It means something which it is thy right to know, and therefore I have made up my mind to tell thee, even at the risk of incurring thy lasting displeasure. It means that I

have followed the guidance of my own heart and bestowed it on a man a thousand times better and nobler than Alfred Barton ever was, and, if the Lord spares us to each other, I shall one day be his wife !”

The Doctor glared at his daughter in speechless amazement. But she met his gaze steadily, although her face grew a shade paler, and the expression of the pain she could not entirely suppress, with the knowledge of the struggle before her, trembled a little about the corners of her lips.

“ Who is this man ? ” he asked.

“ Gilbert Potter.”

Dr. Deane’s pipe dropped from his hand and smashed upon the iron hearth.

“ Martha Deane ! ” he cried. “ Does the d— *what* possesses thee ? Was n’t it enough that thee should drive away the man I had picked out for thee, with a single view to thy own interest and happiness ; but must thee take up, as a wicked spite to thy father, with almost the only man in the neighborhood who brings thee nothing but poverty and disgrace ? It shall not be — it shall never be ! ”

“ It *must* be, father,” she said gently. “ God hath joined our hearts and our lives, and no man — not even thee — shall put them asunder. If there were disgrace, in the eyes of the world, — which I now know there is not, — Gilbert has wiped it out by his courage, his integrity, and his sufferings. If he is poor, I am well to do.”

“ Thee forgets,” the Doctor interrupted, in a stern voice, “ the time is n’t up ! ”

“ I know that unless thee gives thy consent, we must wait three years ; but I hope, father, when thee comes to know Gilbert better, thee will not be so hard. I am thy only child, and my happiness cannot be indifferent to thee. I have tried to obey thee in all things ” —

He interrupted her again. “ Thee ’s adding another cross to them I bear for thee already ! Am I not, in a

manner, thy keeper, and responsible for thee, before the world and in the sight of the Lord? But thee hardened thy heart against the direction of the Spirit, and what wonder, then, that it's hardened against me?"

"No, father," said Martha, rising and laying her hand softly upon his arm, "I *obeyed* the Spirit in that other matter, as I obey my conscience in this. I took my duty into my own hands, and considered it in a humble, and, I hope, a pious spirit. I saw that there were innocent needs of nature, pleasant enjoyments of life, which did not conflict with sincere devotion, and that I was not called upon to renounce them because others happened to see the world in a different light. In this sense, thee is not my keeper; I must render an account, not to thee, but to Him who gave me my soul. Neither is thee the keeper of my heart and its affections. In the one case and the other my right is equal, — nay, it stands as far above thine as Heaven is above the earth!"

In the midst of his wrath, Dr. Deane could not help admiring his daughter. Foiled and exasperated as he was by the sweet, serene, lofty power of her words, they excited a wondering respect which he found it difficult to hide.

"Ah, Martha!" he said, "thee has a wonderful power, if it were only directed by the true Light! But now, it only makes the cross heavier. Don't think that I'll ever consent to see thee carry out thy strange and wicked fancies! Thee must learn to forget this man, Potter, and the sooner thee begins the easier it will be!"

"Father," she answered, with a sad smile, "I'm sorry thee knows so little of my nature. The wickedness would be in forgetting. It is very painful to me that we must differ. Where my duty was wholly owed to thee, I have never delayed to give it; but here it is owed to Gilbert Potter, — owed, and will be given."

"Enough, Martha!" cried the Doctor, trembling with anger; "don't mention his name again!"

"I will not, except when the same duty requires it to be mentioned. But, father, try to think less harshly of the name ; it will one day be mine !"

She spoke gently and imploringly, with tears in her eyes. The conflict had been, as she said, very painful ; but her course was plain, and she dared not flinch a step at the outset. The difficulties must be met face to face, and resolutely assailed, if they were ever to be overcome.

Dr. Deane strode up and down the room in silence, with his hands behind his back. Martha stood by the fire, waiting his further speech, but he did not look at her, and at the end of half an hour, commanded shortly and sharply, without turning his head, —

"Go to bed !"

"Good-night, father," she said, in her usual clear sweet voice, and quietly left the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CROSS-EXAMINATION.

THE story of Gilbert Potter's robbery and marvellous escape from death ran rapidly through the neighborhood, and coming, as it did, upon the heels of his former adventure, created a great excitement. He became almost a hero in the minds of the people. It was not their habit to allow any man to *quite* assume so lofty a character as that, but they granted to Gilbert fully as much interest as, in their estimation, any human being ought properly to receive. Dr. Deane was eagerly questioned, wherever he went; and if his garments could have exhaled the odors of his feelings, his questioners would have smelled aloes and asafoetida instead of sweet-marjoram and bergamot. But—in justice to him be it said—he told and retold the story very correctly; the tide of sympathy ran so high and strong, that he did not venture to stem it on grounds which could not be publicly explained.

The supposed disgrace of Gilbert's birth seemed to be quite forgotten for the time; and there was no young man of spirit in the four townships who was not willing to serve under his command. More volunteers offered, in fact, than could be profitably employed. Sandy Flash was not the game to be unearthed by a loud, numerous, sweeping hunt; traps, pitfalls, secret and unwearied following of his many trails, were what was needed. So much time had elapsed that the beginning must be a conjectural beating of the bushes, and to this end several small companies were organized, and the country between the Octorara and the Delaware very effectually scoured.

When the various parties reunited, after several days, neither of them brought any positive intelligence, but all the greater store of guesses and rumors. Three or four suspicious individuals had been followed and made to give an account of themselves; certain hiding-places, especially the rocky lairs along the Brandywine and the North Valley-Hill, were carefully examined, and some traces of occupation, though none very recent, were discovered. Such evidence as there was seemed to indicate that part of the eastern branch of the Brandywine, between the forks of the stream and the great Chester Valley, as being the probable retreat of the highwayman, and a second expedition was at once organized. The Sheriff, with a posse of men from the lower part of the county, undertook to watch the avenues of escape towards the river.

This new attempt was not more successful, so far as its main object was concerned, but it actually stumbled upon Sandy Flash's trail, and only failed by giving tongue too soon and following too impetuously. Gilbert and his men had a tantalizing impression (which later intelligence proved to have been correct) that the robber was somewhere near them, — buried in the depths of the very wood they were approaching, dodging behind the next barn as it came into view, or hidden under dead leaves in some rain-washed gully. Had they but known, one gloomy afternoon in late December, that they were riding under the cedar-tree in whose close, cloudy foliage he was coiled, just above their heads! Had they but guessed who the deaf old woman was, with her face muffled from the cold, and six cuts of blue yarn in her basket! But detection had not then become a science, and they were far from suspecting the extent of Sandy Flash's devices and disguises.

Many of the volunteers finally grew tired of the fruitless chase, and returned home; others could only spare a few days from their winter labors; but Gilbert Potter, with three or four faithful and courageous young fellows, — one

of whom was Mark Deane, — returned again and again to the search, and not until the end of December did he confess himself baffled. By this time all traces of the highwayman were again lost; he seemed to have disappeared from the country.

“I believe Pratt’s right,” said Mark, as the two issued from the Marlborough woods, on their return to Kennett Square. “Chester County is too hot to hold him.”

“Perhaps so,” Gilbert answered, with a gloomy face. He was more keenly disappointed at the failure than he would then confess, even to Mark. The outrage committed upon him was still unavenged, and thus his loss, to his proud, sensitive nature, carried a certain shame with it. Moreover, the loss itself must speedily be replaced. He had half flattered himself with the hope of capturing not only Sandy Flash, but his plunder; it was hard to forget that, for a day or two, he had been independent, — hard to stoop again to be a borrower and a debtor!

“What are the county authorities good for?” Mark exclaimed. “Between you and me, the Sheriff’s a reg’lar puddin’-head. I wish you was in his place.”

“If Sandy is safe in Jersey, or down on the Eastern Shore, that would do no good. It is n’t enough that he leaves us alone, from this time on; he has a heavy back-score to settle.”

“Come to think on it, Gilbert,” Mark continued, “is n’t it rather queer that you and him should be thrown together in such ways? There was Barton’s fox-chase last spring; then your shootin’ at other, at the Square; and then the robbery on the road. It seems to me as if he picked you out to follow you, and yet I don’t know why.”

Gilbert started. Mark’s words reawakened the dark, incredible suspicion which Martha Deane had removed. Again he declared to himself that he would not entertain the thought, but he could not reject the evidence that there was something more than accident in all these en-

counters. If any one besides Sandy Flash were responsible for the last meeting, it must be Alfred Barton. The latter, therefore, owed him an explanation, and he would demand it.

When they reached the top of the "big hill" north of the Fairthorn farm-house, whence they looked eastward down the sloping corn-field which had been the scene of the husking-frolic, Mark turned to Gilbert with an honest blush all over his face, and said, —

"I don't see why you should n't know it, Gilbert. I'm sure Sally would n't care; you're almost like a brother to her."

"What?" Gilbert asked, yet with a quick suspicion of the coming intelligence.

"Oh, I guess you know well enough, old fellow. I asked her that night, and it's all right between us. What do you say to it, now?"

"Mark, I'm glad of it; I wish you joy, with all my heart!" Gilbert stretched out his hand, and as he turned and looked squarely into Mark's half-bashful yet wholly happy face, he remembered Martha's words, at their last interview.

"You are like a brother to me, Mark," he said, "and you shall have *my* secret. What would you say if I had done the same thing?"

"No?" Mark exclaimed; "who?"

"Guess!"

"Not — not Martha?"

Gilbert smiled.

"By the Lord! It's the best day's work *you've ever* done! Gi' me y'r hand ag'in; we'll stand by each other faster than ever, now!"

When they stopped at Fairthorn's, the significant pressure of Gilbert's hand brought a blush into Sally's cheek; but when Mark met Martha with his tell-tale face, she answered with a proud and tender smile.

Gilbert's first business, after his return, was to have a consultation with Miss Betsy Lavender, who alone knew of the suspicions attaching to Alfred Barton. The spinster had, in the mean time, made the matter the subject of profound and somewhat painful cogitation. She had ransacked her richly stored memory of persons and events, until her brain was like a drawer of tumbled clothes; had spent hours in laborious mental research, becoming so absorbed that she sometimes gave crooked answers when spoken to, and was haunted with a terrible dread of having thought aloud; and had questioned the oldest gossips right and left, coming as near the hidden subject as she dared. When they met, she communicated the result to Gilbert in this wise:

"'T a'n't agreeable for a body to allow they're flummuxed, but if I a'n't, this time, I'm mighty near onto it. It's like lookin' for a set o' buttons that'll match, in a box full o' tail-ends o' things. This'n'd do, and that'n'd do; but you can't put this'n and that'n together; and here's got to be square work, everything fittin' tight and hangin' plumb, or it'll be throwed back onto your hands, and all to be done over ag'in. I dunno when I've done so much head-work and to no purpose, follerin' here and guessin' there, and nosin' into everything that's past and gone; and so my opinion is, whether you like it or not, but never mind, all the same, I can't do no more than give it, that we'd better drop what's past and gone, and look a little more into these present times!"

"Well, Betsy," said Gilbert, with a stern, determined face, "this is what I shall do. I am satisfied that Barton is connected, in some way, with Sandy Flash. What it is, or whether the knowledge will help us, I can't guess; but I shall force Barton to tell me!"

"To tell me. That might do, as far as it goes," she remarked, after a moment's reflection. "It won't be easy; you'll have to threaten as well as coax, but I guess you

can git it out of him in the long run, and maybe I can help you here, two bein' better than one, if one is but a sheep's head."

"I don't see, Betsy, that I need to call on you."

"This way, Gilbert. It's a strong p'int o' law, I've heerd tell, not that I know much o' law, Goodness knows, nor ever want to, but never mind, it's a strong p'int when there's two witnesses to a thing, — one to clinch what the t'other drives in; and you must have a show o' law to work on Alf. Barton, or I'm much mistaken!"

Gilbert reflected a moment. "It can do no harm," he then said; "can you go with me, now?"

"Now's the time! If we only git the light of a farden-candle out o' him, it'll do me a mortal heap o' good; for with all this rakin' and scrapin' for nothin', I'm like a heart pantin' after the water-brooks, though a mouth would be more like it, to my thinkin', when a body's so awful dry as that comes to!"

The two thereupon took the foot-path down through the frozen fields and the dreary timber of the creek-side, to the Barton farm-house. As they approached the barn, they saw Alfred Barton sitting on a pile of straw and watching Giles, who was threshing wheat. He seemed a little surprised at their appearance; but as Gilbert and he had not met since their interview in the corn-field before the former's departure for Chester, he had no special cause for embarrassment.

"Come into the house," he said, leading the way.

"No," Gilbert answered, "I came here to speak with you privately. Will you walk down the lane?"

"No objection, of course," said Barton, looking from Gilbert to Miss Lavender, with a mixture of curiosity and uneasiness. "Good news, I hope; got hold of Sandy's tracks, at last?"

"One of them."

"Ah, you don't say so! Where?"

“Here!”

Gilbert stopped and faced Barton. They were below the barn, and out of Giles’s hearing.

“Barton,” he resumed, “you know what interest I have in the arrest of that man, and you won’t deny my right to demand of you an account of your dealings with him. When did you first make his acquaintance?”

“I’ve told you that, already; the matter has been fully talked over between us,” Barton answered, in a petulant tone.

“It has not been fully talked over. I require to know, first of all, precisely when, and under what circumstances, you and Sandy Flash came together. There is more to come, so let us begin at the beginning.”

“Damme, Gilbert, *you* were there, and saw as much as I did. How could I know who the cursed black-whiskered fellow was?”

“But you found it out,” Gilbert persisted, “and the manner of your finding it out must be explained.”

Barton assumed a bold, insolent manner. “I don’t see as that follows,” he said. “It has nothing in the world to do with his robbery of you; and as for Sandy Flash, I wish to the Lord you’d get hold of him, yourself, instead of trying to make me accountable for his comings and goings!”

“He’s tryin to fly off the handle,” Miss Lavender remarked. “I’d drop that part o’ the business a bit, if I was you, and come to the t’other proof.”

“What the devil have *you* to do here?” asked Barton.

“Miss Betsy is here because I asked her,” Gilbert said. “Because all that passes between us may have to be repeated in a court of justice, and two witnesses are better than one!”

He took advantage of the shock which these words produced upon Barton, and repeated to him the highwayman’s declarations, with the inference they might bear if not sat-

Isfactorily explained. "I kept my promise," he added, "and said nothing to any living soul of your request that I should carry money for you to Chester. Sandy Flash's information, therefore, must have come, either directly or indirectly, from you."

Barton had listened with open mouth and amazed eyes.

"Why, the man is a devil!" he cried. "I, neither, never said a word of the matter to any living soul!"

"Did you really send any money?" Gilbert asked.

"That I did! I got it of Joel Ferris, and it happened he was bound for Chester, the very next day, on his own business; and so, instead of turning it over to me, he just paid it there, according to my directions. You'll understand, this is between ourselves?"

He darted a sharp, suspicious glance at Miss Betsy Lavender, who gravely nodded her head.

"The difficulty is not yet explained," said Gilbert, "and perhaps you'll *now* not deny my right to know something more of your first acquaintance with Sandy Flash?"

"Have it then!" Barton exclaimed, desperately — "and much good may it do you! I thought his name was Fortune, as much as you did, till nine o'clock that night, when he put a pistol to my breast in the woods! If you think I'm colloquing with him, why did he rob me under threat of murder, — money, watch, and everything?"

"Ah-ha!" said Miss Lavender, "and so that's the way **your** watch has been gittin' mended all this while? Main-spring broke, as I've heerd say; well, I don't wonder! Gilbert, I guess this much is true. Alf. Barton'd never live so long without that watch, and that half-peck o' seals, if he could help it!"

"This, too, may as well be kept to ourselves," Barton suggested. "It is n't agreeable to a man to have it known that he's been so taken in as I was, and that's just the reason why I kept it to myself; and, of course, I should n't like it to get around."

Gilbert could do no less than accept this part of the story, and it rendered his later surmises untenable. But the solution which he sought was as far off as ever.

"Barton," he said, after a long pause, "will you do your best to help me in finding out how Sandy Flash got the knowledge?"

"Only show me a way! The best would be to catch him and get it from his own mouth."

He looked so earnest, so eager, and — as far as the traces of cunning in his face would permit — so honest, that Gilbert yielded to a sudden impulse, and said, —

"I believe you, Barton. I've done you wrong in my thoughts, — not willingly, for I don't want to think badly of you or any one else, — but because circumstances seemed to drive me to it. It would have been better if you had told me of your robbery at the start."

"You're right there, Gilbert! I believe I was an outspoken fellow enough, when I was young, and all the better for it, but the old man's driven me into a curst way of keeping dark about everything, and so I go on heaping up trouble for myself."

"Trouble for myself. Alf Barton," said Miss Lavender, "that's the truest word you've said this many a day. Murder will out, you know, and so will robbery, and so will — other things. More o' your doin's is known, not that they're agreeabler, but on the contràry, quite the reverse, and as full need to be explained, though it don't seem to matter much, yet it may, who can tell? And now look here, Gilbert; my crow is to be picked, and you've seen the color of it, but never mind, all the same, since Martha's told the Doctor, it can't make much difference to you. And this is all between ourselves, you understand?"

The last words were addressed to Barton, with a comical, unconscious imitation of his own manner. He guessed something of what was coming, though not the whole of it, and again became visibly uneasy; but he stammered out, —

"Yes; oh, yes! of course."

Gilbert could form a tolerably correct idea of the shape and size of Miss Lavender's crow. He did not feel sure that this was the proper time to have it picked, or even that it should be picked at all; but he imagined that Miss Lavender had either consulted Martha Deane, or that she had wise reasons of her own for speaking. He therefore remained silent.

"First and foremost," she resumed, "I'll tell you, Alf Barton, what we know o' your doin's, and then it's for you to judge whether we'll know any more. Well, you've been tryin' to git Martha Deane for a wife, without wantin' her in your heart, but rather the contr'ary, though it seems queer enough when a body comes to think of it, but never mind; and your father's druv you to it; and you were of a cold shiver for fear she'd take you, and yet you want to let on it a'n't settled betwixt and between you — oh, you need n't chaw your lips and look yaller about the jaws, it's the Lord's truth; and now answer me this, *what do you mean?* and maybe you'll say what right have I got to ask, but never mind, all the same, if I have n't, Gilbert Potter has, for it's him that Martha Deane has promised to 'ake for a husband!"

It was a day of surprises for Barton. In his astonishment at the last announcement, he took refuge from the horror of Miss Lavender's first revelations. One thing was settled, — all the fruits of his painful and laborious plotting were scattered to the winds. Denial was of no use, but neither could an honest explanation, even if he should force himself to give it, be of any possible service.

"Gilbert," he asked, "is this true? — about *you*, I mean."

"Martha Deane and I are engaged, and were already at the time when you addressed her," Gilbert answered.

"Good heavens! I had n't the slightest suspicion of it. Well — I don't begrude you your luck, and of course I'll draw back, and never say another word, now or ever."

"*You* would n't ha' been comfortable with Martha Deane, anyhow," Miss Lavender grimly remarked. "'T is n't good to hitch a colt-horse and an old spavined critter in one team. But that 's neither here nor there ; you ha' n't told us why you made up to her for a purpose, and kep' on pretendin' she did n't know her own mind."

"I've promised Gilbert that I won't interfere, and that 's enough," said Barton, doggedly.

Miss Lavender was foiled for a moment, but she presently returned to the attack. "I dunno as it's enough, after what's gone before," she said. "Could n't you go a step further, and lend Gilbert a helpin' hand, whenever and whatever?"

"Betsy!" Gilbert exclaimed.

"Let me alone, lad! I don't speak in Gilbert's name, nor yet in Martha's; only out o' my own mind. I don't ask you to do anything, but I want to know how it stands with your willin'ness."

"I've offered, more than once, to do him a good turn, if I could; but I guess my help would n't be welcome," Barton answered. The sting of the suspicion rankled in his mind, and Gilbert's evident aversion sorely wounded his vanity.

"Would n't be welcome. Then I'll only say this; maybe I've got it in my power, and 't is n't sayin' much, for the mouse gnawed the meshes o' the lion's net, to help you to what you 're after, bein' as it is n't Martha, and can't be her money. S'pose I did it o' my own accord, leavin' you to feel beholden to me, or not, after all 's said and done?"

But Alfred Barton was proof against even this assault. He was too dejected to enter, at once, into a new plot, the issue of which would probably be as fruitless as the others. He had already accepted a sufficiency of shame, for one day. This last confession, if made, would place his character in a still grosser and meaner light; while, if with

held, the unexplained motive might be presented as a partial justification of his course. He had been surprised into damaging admissions; but here he would take a firm stand.

"You're right so far, Betsy," he said, "that I had a reason — a good reason, it seemed to me, but I may be mistaken — for what I did. It concerns no one under Heaven but my own self; and though I don't doubt your willingness to do me a good turn, it would make no difference — you could n't help one bit. I've given the thing up, and so let it be!"

There was nothing more to be said, and the two cross-examiners took their departure. As they descended to the creek, Miss Lavender remarked, as if to herself, —

"No use — it can't be screwed out of him! So there's one cur'osity the less; not that I'm glad of it, for not knowin' worries more than knowin', whatsoever and who-soever. And I dunno as I think any the wuss of him for shuttin' his teeth so tight onto it."

Alfred Barton waited until the two had disappeared behind the timber in the bottom. Then he slowly followed, stealing across the fields and around the stables, to the back-door of the Unicorn bar-room. It was noticed that, although he drank a good deal that afternoon, his ill-humor was not, as usual, diminished thereby.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEB. SMITH TAKES A RESOLUTION.

It was a raw, overcast evening in the early part of January. Away to the west there was a brownish glimmer in the dark-gray sky, denoting sunset, and from that point there came barely sufficient light to disclose the prominent features of a wild, dreary, uneven landscape.

The foreground was a rugged clearing in the forest, just where the crest of a high hill began to slope rapidly down to the Brandywine. The dark meadows, dotted with irregular lakes of ice, and long, dirty drifts of unmelted snow, but not the stream itself, could be seen. Across the narrow valley rose a cape, or foreland, of the hills beyond, timbered nearly to the top, and falling, on either side, into deep lateral glens, — those warm nooks which the first settlers loved to choose, both from their snug aspect of shelter, and from the cold, sparkling springs of water which every one of them held in its lap. Back of the summits of all the hills stretched a rich, rolling upland, cleared and mapped into spacious fields, but showing everywhere an edge of dark, wintry woods against the darkening sky.

In the midst of this clearing stood a rough cabin, or rather half-cabin, of logs; for the back of it was formed by a ledge of slaty rocks, some ten or twelve feet in height, which here cropped out of the hill-side. The raw clay with which the crevices between the logs had been stopped, had fallen out in many places; the roof of long strips of peeled bark was shrivelled by wind and sun, and held in its place by stones and heavy branches of trees, and a

square tower of plastered sticks in one corner very imperfectly suggested a chimney. There was no inclosed patch of vegetable-ground near, no stable, improvised of corn-shocks, for the shelter of cow or pig, and the habitation seemed not only to be untenanted, but to have been forsaken years before.

Yet a thin, cautious thread of smoke stole above the rocks, and just as the starless dusk began to deepen into night, a step was heard, slowly climbing upward through the rustling leaves and snapping sticks of the forest. A woman's figure, wearily scaling the hill under a load which almost concealed the upper part of her body, for it consisted of a huge wallet, a rattling collection of articles tied in a blanket, and two or three bundles slung over her shoulders with a rope. When at last, panting from the strain, she stood beside the cabin, she shook herself, and the articles, with the exception of the wallet, tumbled to the ground. The latter she set down carefully, thrust her arm into one of the ends and drew forth a heavy jug, which she raised to her mouth. The wind was rising, but its voice among the trees was dull and muffled; now and then a flake of snow dropped out of the gloom, as if some cowardly, insulting creature of the air were spitting at the world under cover of the night.

"It's likely to be a good night," the woman muttered, "and he'll be on the way by this time. I must put things to rights."

She entered the cabin by a narrow door in the southern end. Her first care was to rekindle the smouldering fire from a store of boughs and dry brushwood piled in one corner. When a little flame leaped up from the ashes, it revealed an interior bare and dismal enough, yet very cheery in contrast with the threatening weather outside. The walls were naked logs and rock, the floor of irregular flat stones, and no furniture remained except some part of a cupboard or dresser, near the chimney. Two or three

short saw-cuts of logs formed as many seats, and the only sign of a bed was a mass of dry leaves, upon which a blanket had been thrown, in a hollow under the overhanging base of the rock.

Untying the blanket, the woman drew forth three or four rude cooking utensils, some dried beef and smoked sausages, and two huge round loaves of bread, and arranged them upon the one or two remaining shelves of the dresser. Then she seated herself in front of the fire, staring into the crackling blaze, which she mechanically fed from time to time, muttering brokenly to herself in the manner of one accustomed to be much alone.

"It was a mean thing, after what I'd said, — my word used to be wuth somethin', but times seems to ha' changed. If they have, why should n't I change with 'em, as well's anybody else? Well, why need it matter? I've got a bad name. . . . No, that 'll never do! Stick to what you're about, or you'll be wuthless, even, than they says you are!"

She shook her hard fist, and took another pull at the jug.

"It's well I laid in a good lot o' *that*," she said. "No better company for a lonesome night, and it'll stop his cussin', I reckon, anyhow. Eh? What's that?"

From the wood came a short, quick yelp, as from some stray dog. She rose, slipped out the door, and peered into the darkness, which was full of gathering snow. After listening a moment, she gave a low whistle. It was not answered, but a stealthy step presently approached, and a form, dividing itself from the gloom, stood at her side.

"All right, Deb.?"

"Right as I can make it. I've got meat and drink, and I come straight from the Turk's Head, and Jim says the Sheriff's gone back to Chester, and there's been nobody out these three days. Come in and take bite and sup, and then tell me everything."

They entered the cabin. The door was carefully barred, and then Sandy Flash, throwing off a heavy overcoat, such as the drovers were accustomed to wear, sat down by the fire. His face was redder than its wont, from cold and exposure, and all its keen, fierce lines were sharp and hard. As he warmed his feet and hands at the blaze, and watched Deb. Smith while she set the meat upon the coals, and cut the bread with a heavy hunting-knife, the wary, defiant look of a hunted animal gradually relaxed, and he said, —

“Faith, Deb., this is better than hidin’ in the frost. I believe I’d ha’ froze last night, if I had n’t got down beside an ox for a couple o’ hours. It’s a dog’s life they’ve led me, and I’ve had just about enough of it.”

“Then why not give it up, Sandy, for good and all? I’ll go out with you to the Backwoods, after — after things is settled.”

“And let ’em brag they frightened me away!” he exclaimed, with an oath. “Not by a long shot, Deb. I owe ’em a score for this last chase — I’ll make the rich men o’ Chester County shake in their shoes, and the officers o’ the law, and the Volunteers, damme! before I’ve done with ’em. When I go away for good, I’ll leave somethin’ behind me for them to remember me by!”

“Well, never mind; eat a bit — the meat’s ready, and see here, Sandy! I carried this all the way.”

He seized the jug and took a long draught. “You’re a good ’un, Deb.,” he said. “A man is n’t half a man when his belly’s cold and empty.”

He fell to, and ate long and ravenously. Warmed at last, both by fire and fare, and still more by his frequent potations, he commenced the story of his disguises and escapes, laughing at times with boisterous self-admiration, swearing brutally and bitterly at others, over the relentless energy with which he had been pursued. Deb. Smith listened with eager interest, slapping him upon the back

with a force of approval which would have felled an ordinary man, but which Sandy Flash cheerfully accepted as a caress.

"You see," he said at the close. "after I sneaked between Potter's troop and the Sheriff's, and got down into the lower corner o' the county, I managed to jump aboard a grain-sloop bound for Newport, but they were froze in at the mouth o' Christeen; so I went ashore, dodged around Wilmington, (where I'm rather too well known,) and come up Whitely Creek as a drover from Mar'land. But from Grove up to here, I've had to look out mighty sharp, takin' nigh onto two days for what I could go straight through in half a day."

"Well, I guess you're safe here, Sandy," she said; "they'll never think o' lookin' for you twice't in the same place. Why did n't you send word for me before? You've kep' me a mortal long time a-waitin', and down on the Woodrow farm would ha' done as well as here."

"It's a little too near that Potter. He'd smell me out as quick as if I was a skunk to windward of him. Besides, it's time I was pitchin' on a few new holes; we must talk it over together, Deb."

He lifted the jug again to his mouth. Deb. Smith, although she had kept nearly even pace with him, was not so sensible to the potency of the liquor, and was watching for the proper degree of mellowness, in order to broach the subject over which she had been secretly brooding since his arrival.

"First of all, Sandy," she now said, "I want to talk to you about Gilbert Potter. The man's my friend, and I thought you cared enough about me to let my friends alone."

"So I do, Deb., when they let me alone. I had a right to shoot the fellow, but I let him off easy, as much for your sake as because he was carryin' another man's money."

"That's not true!" she cried. "It was his own money

every cent of it,—hard-earned money, meant to pay off his debts; and I can say it because I helped him earn it, mowin' and reapin' beside him in the harvest-field, thrashin' beside him in the barn, eatin' at his table, and sleepin' under his roof. I gev him my word he was safe from you, but you 've made me out a liar, with no more thought o' me than if I'd been a stranger or an enemy!"

"Come, Deb., don't get into your tantrums. Potter may be a decent fellow, as men go, for anything I know, but you're not beholden to him because he treated you like a Christian as you are. You seem to forgit that he tried to take my life,—that he 's hardly yet giv' up huntin' me like a wild beast! Damn him, if the money *was* his, which I don't believe, it would n't square accounts between us. You think more o' his money than o' my life, you huzzy!"

"No I don't, Sandy!" she protested, "no I don't. You know me better 'n that. What am I here for, to-night? Have I never helped you, and hid you, and tramped the country for you back and forth, by day and by night,—and for what? Not for money, but because I'm your wife, whether or not priest or 'squire has said it. I thought you cared for me, I did, indeed; I thought you might do one thing to please me!"

There was a quivering motion in the muscles of her hard face; her lips were drawn convulsively, with an expression which denoted weeping, although no tears came to her eyes.

"Don't be a fool!" Sandy exclaimed. "S'pose you have served me, is n't it somethin' to have a man to serve? What other husband is there for you in the world, than me,—the only man that is n't afeard o' your fist? You've done your duty by me, I'll allow, and so have I done mine by you!"

"Then," she begged, "do this one thing over and above your duty. Do it, Sandy, as a bit o' kindness to me, and put upon me what work you please, till I've made it up

to you! You dunno what it is, maybe, to have one person in the world as shows a sort o' respect for you — that gives you his hand honestly, like a gentleman, and your full Chris'en name. It does good when a body's been banged about as I've been, and more used to curses than kind words, and not a friend to look after me if I was layin' at Death's door — and I don't say *you* would n't come, Sandy, but you can't. And there's no denyin' that he had the law on his side, and is n't more an enemy than any other man. Maybe he'd even be a friend in need, as far as he dared, if you'd only do it" —

"Do what? What in the Devil's name is the woman drivin' at?" yelled Sandy Flash.

"Give back the money; it's his'n, not Barton's, — I know it. Tell me where it is, and I'll manage the whole thing for you. It's got to be paid in a month or two, folks says, and they'll come on him for it, maybe take and sell his farm — sell th' only house, Sandy, where I git my rights, th' only house where I git a bit o' peace an' comfort! You would n't be that hard on me?"

The highwayman took another deep drink and rose to his feet. His face was stern and threatening. "I've had enough o' this foolery," he said. "Once and for all, Deb., don't you poke your nose into my affairs! Give back the money? Tell you where it is? Pay him for huntin' me down? I could take you by the hair and knock your head ag'in the wall, for them words!"

She arose also and confronted him. The convulsive twitching of her mouth ceased, and her face became as hard and defiant as his. "Sandy Flash, mark my words!" she exclaimed. "You're a-goin' the wrong way, when you stop takin' only from the Collectors and the proud rich men, and sparin' the poor. Instead o' doin' good to balance the bad, it'll soon be all bad, and you no better'n a common thief! You need n't show your teeth; it's true, and I say it square to y'r face!"

She saw the cruel intensity of his anger, but did not flinch. They had had many previous quarrels, in which neither could claim any very great advantage over the other; but the highwayman was now in an impatient and exasperated mood, and she dared more than she suspected in defying him.

"You ——!" (the epithet he used cannot be written,) "will you stop your jaw, or shall I stop it for you? I'm your master, and I give you your orders, and the first order is, Not another word, now and never, about Potter or his money!"

He had never before outraged her by such a word, never before so brutally asserted his claim to her obedience. All the hot, indignant force of her fierce, coarse nature rose in resistance. She was thoroughly aroused and fearless. The moment had come, she felt, when the independence which had been her compensation amid all the hardships and wrongs of her life, was threatened, — when she must either preserve it by a desperate effort, or be trampled under foot by this man, whom she both loved and feared, and in that moment, hated.

"I'll not hold my jaw!" she cried, with flashing eyes. "Not even at your biddin', Sandy Flash! I'll not rest till I have the money out o' you; there's no law ag'inste stealin' from a thief!"

The answer was a swift, tremendous blow of the highwayman's fist, delivered between her eyes. She fell, and lay for a moment stunned, the blood streaming from her face. Then with a rapid movement, she seized the hunting-knife which lay beside the fire, and sprang to her feet.

The knife was raised in her right hand, and her impulse was to plunge it into his heart. But she could not avoid his eyes; they caught and held her own, as if by some diabolical fascination. He stood motionless, apparently awaiting the blow. Nothing in his face or attitude expressed fear; only all the power of the man seemed to

be concentrated in his gaze, and to hold her back. The impulse once arrested, he knew, it would not return. The eyes of each were fixed on the other's, and several minutes of awful silence thus passed.

Finally, Deb. Smith slightly shuddered, as if with cold, her hand slowly fell, and without a word she turned away to wash her bloody face.

Sandy Flash grinned, took another drink of whiskey, resumed his seat before the fire, and then proceeded to fill his pipe. He lit and smoked it to the end, without turning his head, or seeming to pay the least attention to her movements. She, meanwhile, had stopped the flow of blood from her face, bound a rag around her forehead, and lighted her own pipe, without speaking. The highwayman first broke the silence.

"As I was a-sayin'," he remarked, in his ordinary tone, "we've got to look out for new holes, where the scent is n't so strong as about these. What do you think o' th' Octorara?"

"Where?" she asked. Her voice was hoarse and strange, but he took no notice of it, gazing steadily into the fire as he puffed out a huge cloud of smoke.

"Well, pretty well down," he said. "There's a big bit o' woodland, nigh onto two thousand acres, belongin' to somebody in Baltimore that does n't look at it once't in ten years, and my thinkin' is, it'd be as safe as the Backwoods. I must go to—it's no difference where—to-morrow mornin', but I'll be back day after to-morrow night, and you need n't stir from here till I come. You've grub enough for that long, eh?"

"It'll do," she muttered.

"Then, that's enough. I must be off an hour before day, and I'm devilish fagged and sleepy, so here goes!"

With these words he rose, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and stretched himself on the bed of leaves. She continued to smoke her pipe.

"Deb.," he said, five minutes afterwards, "I'm not sure o' wakin'. You look out for me, — do you hear?"

"I hear," she answered, in the same low, hoarse voice, without turning her head. In a short time Sandy Flash's deep breathing announced that he slept. Then she turned and looked at him with a grim, singular smile, as the wavering fire-light drew clear pictures of his face which the darkness as constantly wiped out again. By-and-by she noiselessly moved her seat nearer to the wall, leaned her head against the rough logs, and seemed to sleep. But, even if it were sleep, she was conscious of his least movement, and started into alert wakefulness, if he turned, muttered in dreams, or crooked a finger among the dead leaves. From time to time she rose, stole out of the cabin and looked at the sky. Thus the night passed away.

There was no sign of approaching dawn in the dull, overcast, snowy air; but a blind, animal instinct of time belonged to her nature, and about two hours before sunrise, she set about preparing a meal. When all was ready, she bent over Sandy Flash, seized him by the shoulder, and shook his eyes open.

"Time!" was all she said.

He sprang up, hastily devoured the bread and meat, and emptied the jug of its last remaining contents.

"Hark ye, Deb.," he exclaimed, when he had finished, "you may as well trudge over to the Turk's Head and fill this while I'm gone. We'll need all of it, and more, to-morrow night. Here's a dollar, to pay for't. Now I must be on the tramp, but you may look for me to-morrow, an hour after sun."

He examined his pistols, stuck them in his belt, threw his drover's cloak over his shoulders, and strode out of the cabin. She waited until the sound of his footsteps had died away in the cold, dreary gloom, and then threw herself upon the pallet which he had vacated. This time she slept soundly, until hours after the gray winter day had come up the sky.

Her eyes were nearly closed by the swollen flesh, and she laid handfuls of snow upon her face, to cool the inflammation. At first, her movements were uncertain, expressing a fierce conflict, a painful irresolution of feeling; she picked up the hunting-knife, looked at it with a ghastly smile, and then threw it from her. Suddenly, however, her features changed, and every trace of her former hesitation vanished. After hurriedly eating the fragments left from Sandy's breakfast, she issued from the cabin and took a straight and rapid course eastward, up and over the hill.

During the rest of that day and the greater part of the next, the cabin was deserted.

It was almost sunset, and not more than an hour before Sandy Flash's promised return, when Deb. Smith again made her appearance. Her face was pale, (except for the dark blotches around the eyes,) worn, and haggard; she seemed to have grown ten years older in the interval.

Her first care was to rekindle the fire and place the replenished jug in its accustomed place. Then she arranged and rearranged the rude blocks which served for seats, the few dishes and the articles of food on the shelf, and, when all had been done, paced back and forth along the narrow floor, as if pushed by some invisible, tormenting power.

Finally a whistle was heard, and in a minute afterwards Sandy Flash entered the door. The bright blaze of the hearth shone upon his bold, daring, triumphant face.

"That's right, Deb.," he said. "I'm dry and hungry, and here's a rabbit you can skin and set to broil in no time. Let's look at you, old gal! The devil! — I did n't mean to mark you like that. Well, bygones is bygones, and better times is a-comin'."

"Sandy!" she cried, with a sudden, appealing energy, "Sandy — once't more! Won't you do for me what I want o' you?"

His face darkened in an instant. "Deb.!" was all the word he uttered, but she understood the tone.

He took off his pistol-belt and laid it on the shelf. "Lay there, pets!" he said; "I won't want you to-night. A long tramp it was, and I'm glad it's over. Deb., I guess I've nigh tore off one o' my knee-buckles, comin' through the woods."

Placing his foot upon one of the logs, he bent down to examine the buckle. Quick as lightning, Deb., who was standing behind him, seized each of his arms, just above the elbows, with her powerful hands, and drew them towards each other upon his back. At the same time she uttered a shrill, wild cry, — a scream so strange and unearthly in its character that Sandy Flash's blood chilled to hear it.

"Curse you, Deb., what are you doing? Are you clean mad?" he ejaculated, struggling violently to free his arms.

"Which is strongest now?" she asked; "my arms, or your'n? I've got you, I'll hold you, and I'll only let go when I please!"

He swore and struggled, but he was powerless in her iron grip. In another minute the door of the cabin was suddenly burst open, and two armed men sprang upon him. More rapidly than the fact can be related, they snapped a pair of heavy steel handcuffs upon his wrists, pinioned his arms at his sides, and bound his knees together. Then, and not till then, Deb. Smith relaxed her hold.

Sandy Flash made one tremendous muscular effort, to test the strength of his bonds, and then stood motionless. His white teeth flashed between his parted lips, and there was a dull, hard glare in his eyes which told that though struck dumb with astonishment and impotent rage, he was still fearless, still unsubdued. Deb. Smith, behind him, leaned against the wall, pale and panting.

"A good night's work!" remarked Chaffey, the constable, as he possessed himself of the musket, pistol-belt, and hunting-knife. "I guess this pitcher won't go to the well any more."

"We 'll see," Sandy exclaimed, with a sneer. "You 've got me, not through any pluck o' your'n, but through black, underhanded treachery. You 'd better double chain and handcuff me, or I may be too much for you yet!"

"I guess you 'll do," said the constable, examining the cords by the light of a lantern which his assistant had in the mean time fetched from without. "I 'll even untie your knees, for you 've to walk over the hill to the next farm-house, where we 'll find a wagon to carry you to Chester jail. I promise you more comfortable quarters than these, by daylight."

The constable then turned to Deb. Smith, who had neither moved nor spoken.

"You need n't come with us without you want to," he said. "You can get your share of the money at any time; but you must remember to be ready to appear and testify, when Court meets."

"Must I do that?" she gasped.

"Why, to be sure! It 's a reg'lar part of the trial, and can't be left out, though there 's enough to hang the fellow ten times over, without you."

The two unbound Sandy Flash's knees and placed themselves on each side of him, the constable holding a cocked pistol in his right hand.

"March is the word, is it?" said the highwayman. "Well, I 'm ready. Potter was right, after all; he said there 'd be a curse on the money, and there is; but I never guessed the curse 'd come upon me through *you*, Deb.!"

"Oh, Sandy!" she cried, starting forward, "you druv me to it! The curse was o' your own makin' — and I gev you a last chance to-night, but you throwed it from you!"

"Very well, Deb," he answered, "if I 've got my curse, don't think you 'll not have your'n! Go down to Chester and git your blood-money, and see what 'll come of it, and what 'll come to you!"

He turned towards her as he spoke, and the expression

of his face seemed so frightful that she shuddered and covered her eyes. The next moment, the old cabin door creaked open, fell back with a crash, and she was alone.

She stared around at the dreary walls. The sound of their footsteps had died away, and only the winter night-wind wailed through the crannies of the hut. Accustomed as she was to solitary life and rudest shelter, and to the companionship of her superstitious fancies, she had never before felt such fearful loneliness, such overpowering dread. She heaped sticks upon the fire, sat down before it, and drank from the jug. Its mouth was still wet from his lips, and it seemed that she was already drinking down the commencement of the curse.

Her face worked, and hard, painful groans burst from her lips. She threw herself upon the floor and grovelled there, until the woman's relief which she had almost unlearned forced its forgotten way, through cramps and agonies, to her eyes. In the violent passion of her weeping and moaning, God saw and pitied, that night, the struggles of a dumb, ignorant, yet not wholly darkened nature.

Two hours afterwards she arose, sad, stern, and determined, packed together the things she had brought with her, quenched the fire (never again to be relighted) upon the hearth, and took her way, through cold and darkness, down the valley.

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO ATTEMPTS.

THE news of Sandy Flash's capture ran like wildfire through the county. As the details became more correctly known, there was great rejoicing but greater surprise, for Deb. Smith's relation to the robber, though possibly surmised by a few, was unsuspected by the community at large. In spite of the service which she had rendered by betraying her paramour into the hands of justice, a bitter feeling of hostility towards her was developed among the people, and she was generally looked upon as an accomplice to Sandy Flash's crimes, who had turned upon him only when she had ceased to profit by them.

The public attention was thus suddenly drawn away from Gilbert Potter, and he was left to struggle, as he best might, against the difficulties entailed by his loss. He had corresponded with Mr. Trainer, the conveyancer in Chester, and had learned that the money still due must not only be forthcoming on the first of April, but that it probably could not be obtained there. The excitement for buying lands along the Alleghany, Ohio, and Beaver rivers, in western Pennsylvania, had seized upon the few capitalists of the place, and Gilbert's creditor had already been subjected to inconvenience and possible loss, as one result of the robbery. Mr. Trainer therefore suggested that he should make a new loan in his own neighborhood, where the spirit of speculation had not yet reached.

The advice was prudent and not unfriendly, although of a kind more easy to give than to carry into execution. Mark's money-belt had been restored, greatly against the

will of the good-hearted fellow (who would have cheerfully lent Gilbert the whole amount had he possessed it), and there was enough grain yet to be threshed and sold, to yield something more than a hundred dollars; but this was all which Gilbert could count upon from his own resources. He might sell the wagon and one span of horses, reducing by their value the sum which he would be obliged to borrow; yet his hope of recovering the money in another year could only be realized by retaining them, to continue, from time to time, his occupation of hauling flour.

Although the sympathy felt for him was general and very hearty, it never took the practical form of an offer of assistance, and he was far too proud to accept that plan of relief which a farmer, whose barn had been struck by lightning and consumed, had adopted, the previous year, — going about the neighborhood with a subscription-list, and soliciting contributions. His nearest friends were as poor as, or poorer than, himself, and those able to aid him felt no call to tender their services.

Martha Deane knew of this approaching trouble, not from Gilbert's own lips, for she had seen him but once and very briefly since his return from the chase of Sandy Flash. It was her cousin Mark, who, having entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with her lover, betrayed (considering that the end sanctioned the means) the confidence reposed in him.

The thought that her own coming fortune lay idle, while Gilbert might be saved by the use of a twentieth part of it, gave Martha Deane no peace. The whole belonged to him prospectively, yet would probably be of less service when it should be legally her own to give, than the fragment which now would lift him above anxiety and humiliation. The money had been bequeathed to her by a maternal aunt, whose name she bore, and the provisions by which the bequest was accompanied, so light and reasonable before, now seemed harsh and unkind.

The payment of the whole sum, or any part of it, she saw, could not be anticipated. But she imagined there must be a way to obtain a loan of the necessary amount, with the bequest as security. With her ignorance of business matters, she felt the need of counsel in this emergency; yet her father was her guardian, and there seemed to be no one else to whom she could properly apply. Not Gilbert, for she fancied he might reject the assistance she designed, and therefore she meant to pay the debt before it became due, without his knowledge; nor Mark, nor Farmer Fairthorn. Betsy Lavender, when appealed to, shook her head, and remarked, —

“Lord bless you, child! a wuss snarl than ever. I’m gittin’ a bit skeary, when you talk o’ law and money matters, and that ’s the fact. Not that I find fault with your wishin’ to do it, but the contràry, and there might be ways, as you say, only I ’m not lawyer enough to find ’em, and as to advisin’ where I don’t see my way clear, Defend me from it!”

Thus thrown back upon herself, Martha was forced to take the alternative which she would gladly have avoided, and from which, indeed, she hoped nothing, — an appeal to her father. Gilbert Potter’s name had not again been mentioned between them. She, for her part, had striven to maintain her usual gentle, cheerful demeanor, and it is probable that Dr. Deane made a similar attempt; but he could not conceal a certain coldness and stiffness, which made an uncomfortable atmosphere in their little household.

“Well, Betsy,” Martha said (they were in her room, upstairs), “Father has just come in from the stable, I see. Since there is no other way, I will go down and ask his advice.”

“You don’t mean it, child!” cried the spinster.

Martha left the room, without answer.

“She’s got *that* from him, anyhow,” Miss Betsy remarked,

"and which o' the two is stubbornest, I could n't undertake to say. If he 's dead-set on the wrong side, wny, she 's jist as dead-set on the right side, and that makes a mortal difference. I don't see why I should be all of a trimble, that only sets here and waits, while she 's stickin' her head into the lion's mouth; but so it is! Is n't about time for *you* to be doin' somethin', Betsy Lavender!"

Martha Deane entered the front sitting-room with a grave, deliberate step. The Doctor sat at his desk, with a pair of heavy silver-rimmed spectacles on his nose, looking over an antiquated "Materia Medica." His upper lip seemed to have become harder and thinner, at the expense of the under one, which pouted in a way that expressed vexation and ill-temper. He was, in fact, more annoyed than he would have confessed to any human being. Alfred Barton's visits had discontinued, and he could easily guess the reason. Moreover, a suspicion of Gilbert Potter's relation to his daughter was slowly beginning to permeate the neighborhood; and more than once, within the last few days, all his peculiar diplomacy had been required to parry a direct question. He foresaw that the subject would soon come to the notice of his elder brethren among the Friends, who felt self-privileged to rebuke and remonstrate, even in family matters of so delicate a nature.

It was useless, the Doctor knew, to attempt coercion with Martha. If any measure could succeed in averting the threatened shame, it must be kindly persuasion, coupled with a calm, dispassionate appeal to her understanding. The quiet, gentle way in which she had met his anger, he now saw, had left the advantage of the first encounter on her side. His male nature and long habit of rule made an equal self-control very difficult, on his part, and he resolved to postpone a recurrence to the subject until he should feel able to meet his daughter with her own weapons. Probably some reflection of the kind then occupied his mind, in spite of the "Materia Medica" before him.

"Father," said Martha, seating herself with a bit of sewing in her hand, "I want to ask thee a few questions about business matters."

The Doctor looked at her. "Well, thee 's taking a new turn," he remarked. "Is it anything very important?"

"Very important," she answered; "it 's about my own fortune."

"I thought thee understood, Martha, that that matter was all fixed and settled, until thee 's twenty-five, unless — unless" —

Here the Doctor hesitated. He did not wish to introduce the sore subject of his daughter's marriage.

"I know what thee means, father. Unless I should sooner marry, with thy consent. But I do not expect to marry now, and therefore do not ask thy permission. What I want to know is, whether I could not obtain a loan of a small sum of money, on the security of the legacy?"

"That depends on circumstances," said the Doctor, slowly, and after a long pause, during which he endeavored to guess his daughter's design. "It might be, — yes, it might be; but, Martha, surely thee does n't want for money? Why should thee borrow?"

"Could n't thee suppose, father, that I need it for some good purpose? I've always had plenty, it is true; but I don't think thee can say I ever squandered it foolishly or thoughtlessly. This is a case where I wish to make an investment, — a permanent investment."

"Ah, indeed? I always fancied thee cared less for money than a prudent woman ought. How much might this investment be?"

"About six hundred dollars," she answered.

"Six hundred!" exclaimed the Doctor; "that 's a large sum to venture, a large sum! Since thee can only raise it with my help, thee 'll certainly admit my right, as thy legal guardian, if not as thy father, to ask where, how, and on what security the money will be invested?"

Martha hesitated only long enough to reflect that her father's assertion was probably true, and without his aid she could do nothing. "Father," she then said, "*I am the security.*"

"I don't understand thee, child."

"I mean that my whole legacy will be responsible to the lender for its repayment in three years from this time. The security *I* ask, I have in advance ; it is the happiness of my life !"

"Martha ! thee does n't mean to say that thee would"—

Dr. Deane could get no further. Martha, with a sorrowful half-smile, took up his word.

"Yes, father, I would. Lest thee should not have understood me right, I repeat that I would, and will, lift the mortgage on Gilbert Potter's farm. He has been very unfortunate, and there is a call for help which nobody heeds as he deserves. If I give it now, I simply give a part in advance. The whole will be given afterwards."

Dr. Deane's face grew white, and his lip trembled, in spite of himself. It was a minute or two before he ventured to say, in a tolerably steady voice, —

"Thee still sets up thy right (as thee calls it) against mine, but mine is older built and will stand. To help thee to this money would only be to encourage thy wicked fancy for the man. Of course, I can't do it ; I wonder thee should expect it of me. I wonder, indeed, thee should think of taking as a husband one who borrows money of thee almost as soon as he has spoken his mind !"

For an instant Martha Deane's eyes flashed. "Father !" she cried, "it is not so ! Gilbert does n't even know my desire to help him. I must ask this of thee, to speak no evil of him in my hearing. It would only give me unnecessary pain, not shake my faith in his honesty and goodness. I see thee will not assist me, and so I must endeavor to find whether the thing cannot be done without thy assistance. In three years more the legacy will be

mine, I shall go to Chester, and consult a lawyer, whether my own note for that time could not be accepted!"

"I can spare thee the trouble," the Doctor said. "In case of thy death before the three years are out, who is to pay the note? Half the money falls to me, and half to thy uncle Richard. Thy aunt Martha was wise. It truly seems as if she had foreseen just what has happened, and meant to baulk thy present rashness. Thee may go to Chester, and welcome, if thee doubts my word; but unless thee can give positive assurance that thee will be alive in three years' time, I don't know of any one foolish enough to advance thee money."

The Doctor's words were cruel enough; he might have spared his triumphant, mocking smile. Martha's heart sank within her, as she recognized her utter helplessness. Not yet, however, would she give up the sweet hope of bringing aid; for Gilbert's sake she would make another appeal.

"I won't charge thee, father, with being intentionally unkind. It would almost seem, from thy words, that thee is rather glad than otherwise, because my life is uncertain. If I *should* die, would thee not care enough for my memory to pay a debt, the incurring of which brought me peace and happiness during life? *Then*, surely, thee would forgive thy heart is not so hard as thee would have me believe, thee wishes me happiness, I cannot doubt, but thinks it will come in *thy* way, not in mine. Is it not possible to grant me this — only this — and leave everything else to time?"

Dr. Deane was touched and softened by his daughter's words. Perhaps he might even have yielded to her entreaty at once, had not a harsh and selfish condition presented itself in a very tempting form to his mind.

"Martha," he said, "I fancy that thee looks upon this matter of the loan in the light of a duty, and will allow that thy motives may be weighty to thy own mind. I ask thee to calm thyself, and consider things clearly. If I grant thy

request, I do so against my own judgment, yea, — since it concerns thy interests,— against my own conscience. This is not a thing to be lightly done, and if I should yield, I might reasonably expect some little sacrifice of present inclination — yet all for thy future good — on thy part. I would cheerfully borrow the six hundred dollars for thee, or make it up from my own means, if need be, to know that the prospect of thy disgrace was averted. Thee sees no disgrace, I am aware, and pity that it is so; but if thy feeling for the young man is entirely pure and unselfish, it should be enough to know that thee had saved him from ruin, without considering thyself bound to him for life.”

The Doctor sharply watched his daughter's face while he spoke. She looked up, at first, with an eager, wondering light of hope in her eyes,— a light that soon died away, and gave place to a cloudy, troubled expression. Then the blood rose to her cheeks, and her lips assumed the clear, firm curve which always reflected the decisions of her mind.

“Father,” she said, “I see thee has learned how to tempt, as well as threaten. For the sake of doing a present good, thee would have me bind myself to do a life-long injustice. Thee would have me take an external duty to balance a violation of the most sacred conscience of my heart. How little thee knows me! It is not alone that I am necessary to Gilbert Potter's happiness, but also that he is necessary to mine. Perhaps it is the will of Heaven that so great a bounty should not come to me too easily, and I must bear, without murmuring, that my own father is set against me. Thee may try me, if thee desires, for the coming three years, but I can tell thee as well, now, what the end will be. Why not rather tempt me by offering the money Gilbert needs, on the condition of my giving up the rest of the legacy to thee? That would be a temptation, I confess.”

“No!” he exclaimed, with rising exasperation, “if thee

has hardened thy heart against all my counsels for thy good, I will at least keep my own conscience free. I will not help thee by so much as the moving of a finger. All I can do is, to pray that thy stubborn mind may be bent, and gradually led back to the Light!"

He put away the book, took his cane and broad-brimmed hat, and turned to leave the room. Martha rose, with a sad but resolute face, and went up-stairs to her chamber.

Miss Betsy Lavender, when she learned all that had been said, on both sides, was thrown into a state of great agitation and perplexity of mind. She stared at Martha Deane, without seeming to see her, and muttered from time to time such fragmentary phrases as, — "If I was right-down sure," or, "It 'd only be another weepin' tried and throwed away, at the wust."

"What are you thinking of, Betsy?" Martha finally asked.

"Thinkin' of? Well, I can't rightly tell you. It's a bit o' knowledge that come in my way, once't upon a time, never meanin' to make use of it in all my born days, and I would n't now, only for your two sakes; not that it concerns you a mite; but never mind, there's ten thousand ways o' workin' on men's minds, and I can't do no more than try my way."

Thereupon Miss Lavender arose, and would have descended to the encounter at once, had not Martha wisely entreated her to wait a day or two, until the irritation arising from her own interview had had time to subside in her father's mind.

"It's puttin' me on nettles, now that I mean fast and firm to do it; but you're quite right, Martha," the spinster said.

Three or four days afterwards she judged the proper time had arrived, and boldly entered the Doctor's awful presence. "Doctor," she began, "I've come to have a little talk, and it's no use beatin' about the bush, plainness o' speech bein' one o' my ways; not that folks always thinks

it a virtue, but oftentimes the contràry, and so may you, maybe; but when there 's a worry in a house, it 's better whatsoever and whosoever, to have it come to a head than go on achin' and achin', like a blind bile!"

"H'm," snorted the Doctor, "I see what thee's driving at, and I may as well tell thee at once, that if thee comes to me from Martha, I've heard enough from her, and more than enough."

"More 'n enough," repeated Miss Lavender. "But you're wrong. I come neither from Martha, nor yet from Gilbert Potter; but I've been thinkin' that you and me, bein' old,—in a measure, that is,—and not so direckly concerned, might talk the thing over betwixt and between us, and maybe come to a better understandin' for both sides."

Dr. Deane was not altogether disinclined to accept this proposition. Although Miss Lavender sometimes annoyed him, as she rightly conjectured, by her plainness of speech, he had great respect for her shrewdness and her practical wisdom. If he could but even partially win her to his views, she would be a most valuable ally.

"Then say thy say, Betsy," he assented.

"Thy say, Betsy. Well, first and foremost, I guess we may look upon Alf. Barton's courtin' o' Martha as broke off for good, the fact bein' that he never wanted to have her, as he s told me since with his own mouth."

"What?" Dr. Deane exclaimed.

"With his own mouth," Miss Lavender repeated. "And as to his reasons for lettin' on, I don't know 'em. Maybe you can guess 'em, as you seem to ha' had everything cut and dried betwixt and between you; but that's neither here nor there—Alf. Barton bein' out o' the way, why, the coast's clear, and so Gilbert's case is to be considered by itself; and let's come to the p'int, name'y, what you've got ag'in him?"

"I wonder thee can ask, Betsy! He's poor, he's base-born, without position or influence in the neighborhood,—

in no way a husband for Martha Deane! If her head 's turned because he has been robbed, and marvellously saved, and talked about, I suppose I must wait till she comes to her right senses."

"I rather expect," Miss Lavender gravely remarked, "that they were bespoke before all that happened, and it 's not a case o' sudden fancy, but somethin' bred in the bone and not to be cured by plasters. We won't talk o' that now, but come back to Gilbert Potter, and I dunno as you 're quite right in any way about his bein's and doin's. With that farm o' his'n, he can't be called poor, and I should n't wonder, though I can't give no proofs, but never mind, wait awhile and you 'll see, that he 's not base-born, after all; and as for respect in the neighborhood, there 's not a man more respected nor looked up to, — so the last p'int 's settled, and we 'll take the t' other two; and I s'pose you mean his farm is n't enough?"

"Thee 's right," Dr. Deane said. "As Martha's guardian, I am bound to watch over her interests, and every prudent man will agree with me that her husband ought at least to be as well off as herself."

"Well, all I've got to say, is, it's lucky for you that Naomi Blake did n't think as you do, when she married you. What's sass for the goose ought to be sass for the gander (meanin' you and Gilbert), and every prudent man will agree with me."

This was a home-thrust, which Dr. Deane was not able to parry. Miss Lavender had full knowledge whereof she affirmed, and the Doctor knew it.

"I admit that there might be other advantages," he said, rather pompously, covering his annoyance with a pinch of snuff, — "advantages which partly balance the want of property. Perhaps Naomi Blake thought so too. But here, I think, it would be hard for thee to find such. Or does thee mean that the man's disgraceful birth is a recommendation?"

"Recommendation? No!" Miss Lavender curtly replied.

"We need go no further, then. Admitting thee's right in all other respects, here is cause enough for me. I put it to thee, as a sensible woman, whether I would not cover both myself and Martha with shame, by allowing her marriage with Gilbert Potter?"

Miss Lavender sat silently in her chair and appeared to meditate.

"Thee does n't answer," the Doctor remarked, after a pause.

"I dunno how it come about," she said, lifting her head and fixing her dull eyes on vacancy; "I was thinkin' o' the time I was up at Strasburg, while your brother was livin', more 'n twenty year ago.

With all his habitual self-control and gravity of deportment, Dr. Deane could not repress a violent start of surprise. He darted a keen, fierce glance at Miss Betsy's face, but she was staring at the opposite wall, apparently unconscious of the effect of her words.

"I don't see what that has to do with Gilbert Potter," he presently said, collecting himself with an effort.

"Nor I, neither," Miss Lavender absently replied, "only it happened that I knowed Eliza Little, — her that used to live at the Gap, you know, — and just afore she died, that fall the fever was so bad, and I nussin' her, and not another soul awake in the house, she told me a secret about your brother's boy, and I must say few men would ha' acted as Henry done, and there's more 'n one mighty beholden to him."

Dr. Deane stretched out his hand as if he would close her mouth. His face was like fire, and a wild expression of fear and pain shot from his eyes.

"Betsy Lavender," he said, in a hollow voice, "thee is a terrible woman. Thee forces even the secrets of the dying from them, and brings up knowledge that should

be hidden forever. What can all this avail thee? Why does thee threaten me with appearances, that cannot now be explained, all the witnesses being dead?"

"Witnesses bein' dead," she repeated. "Are you sorry for that?"

He stared at her in silent consternation.

"Doctor," she said, turning towards him for the first time, "there 's no livin' soul that knows, except you and me, and if I seem hard, I 'm no harder than the knowledge in your own heart. What 's the difference, in the sight o' the Lord, between the one that has a bad name and the one that has a good name? Come, you set yourself up for a Chris'en, and so I ask you whether you're the one that ought to fling the first stone; whether repentance—and there 's that, of course, for you a'n't a nateral bad man, Doctor, but rather the contrary—ought n't to be showed in deeds, to be wuth much! You're set ag'in Martha, and your pride's touched, which I can't say as I wonder at, all folks havin' pride, me among the rest, not that I've much to be proud of, Goodness knows; but never mind, don't you talk about Gilbert Potter in that style, leastways before me!"

During this speech, Dr. Deane had time to reflect. Although aghast at the unexpected revelation, he had not wholly lost his cunning. It was easy to perceive what Miss Lavender intended to do with the weapon in her hands, and his aim was to render it powerless.

"Betsy," he said, "there 's one thing thee won't deny,—that, if there was a fault, (which I don't allow), it has been expiated. To make known thy suspicions would bring sorrow and trouble upon two persons for whom thee professes to feel some attachment; if thee could prove what thee thinks, it would be a still greater misfortune for them than for me. They are young, and my time is nearly spent. We all have serious burdens which we must bear alone, and thee must n't forget that the same consideration

for the opinion of men which keeps thee silent, keeps me from consenting to Martha's marriage with Gilbert Potter. We are bound alike."

"We're not!" she cried, rising from her seat. "But I see it's no use to talk any more, now. Perhaps since you know that there's a window in you, and me lookin' in, you'll try and keep th' inside o' your house in better order. Whether I'll act accordin' to my knowledge or not, depends on how things turns out, and so sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, or however it goes!"

With these words she left the room, though foiled, not entirely hopeless.

"It's like buttin' over an old stone-wall," she said to Martha. "The first hit with a rammer seems to come back onto you, and jars y'r own bones, and may be the next, and the next; and then little stones git out o' place, and then the wall shakes, and comes down,—and so we've been a-doin'. I guess I made a crack to-day, but we'll see."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST OF SANDY FLASH.

THE winter crept on, February was drawing to a close, and still Gilbert Potter had not ascertained whence the money was to be drawn which would relieve him from embarrassment. The few applications he had made were failures; some of the persons really had no money to invest, and others were too cautious to trust a man who, as everybody knew, had been unfortunate. In five weeks more the sum must be made up, or the mortgage would be foreclosed.

Both Mary Potter and her son, in this emergency, seemed to have adopted, by accident or sympathy, the same policy towards each other, — to cheer and encourage, in every possible way. Gilbert carefully concealed his humiliation, on returning home from an unsuccessful appeal for a loan, and his mother veiled her renewed sinking of the heart, as she heard of his failure, under a cheerful hope of final success, which she did not feel. Both had, in fact, one great consolation to fall back upon, — she that he had been mercifully saved to her, he that he was beloved by a noble woman.

All the grain that could be spared and sold placed but little more than a hundred dollars in Gilbert's hands, and he began seriously to consider whether he should not be obliged to sell his wagon and team. He had been offered a hundred and fifty dollars, (a very large sum, in those days,) for Roger, but he would as soon have sold his own right arm. Not even to save the farm would he have

parted with the faithful animal. Mark Deane persisted in increasing his seventy-five dollars to a hundred, and forcing the loan upon his friend; so one third of the amount was secure, and there was still hope for the rest.

It is not precisely true that there had been no offer of assistance. There was *one*, which Gilbert half-suspected had been instigated by Betsy Lavender. On a Saturday afternoon, as he visited Kennett Square to have Roger's fore-feet shod, he encountered Alfred Barton at the blacksmith's shop, on the same errand.

"The man I wanted to see!" cried the latter, as Gilbert dismounted. "Ferris was in Chester last week, and he saw Chaffey, the constable, you know, that helped catch Sandy; and Chaffey told him he was sure, from something Sandy let fall, that Deb. Smith had betrayed him out of revenge, because he robbed you. I want to know how it all hangs together."

Gilbert suddenly recalled Deb. Smith's words, on the day after his escape from the inundation, and a suspicion of the truth entered his mind for the first time.

"It must have been so!" he exclaimed. "She has been a better friend to me than many people of better name."

Barton noticed the bitterness of the remark, and possibly drew his own inference from it. He looked annoyed for a moment, but presently beckoned Gilbert to one side, and said, —

"I don't know whether you've given up your foolish suspicions about me and Sandy; but the trial comes off next week, and you'll have to be there as a witness, of course, and can satisfy yourself, if you please, that my explanation was nothing but the truth. I've not felt so jolly in twenty years, as when I heard that the fellow was really in the jug!"

"I told you I believed your words," Gilbert answered, "and that settles the matter. Perhaps I shall find out

how Sandy learned what you said to me that evening, on the back-porch of the Unicorn, and if so, I am bound to let you know it."

"See here, Gilbert!" Barton resumed. "Folks say you must borrow the money you lost, or the mortgage on your farm will be foreclosed. Is that so? and how much money might it be, altogether, if you don't mind telling?"

"Not so much, if those who have it to lend, had a little faith in me, — some four or five hundred dollars."

"That ought to be got, without trouble," said Barton. "If I had it by me, I'd lend it to you in a minute; but you know I borrowed from Ferris myself, and all o' my own is so tied up that I could n't move it without the old man getting on my track. I'll tell you what I'll do, though; I'll indorse your note for a year, if it can be kept a matter between ourselves and the lender. On account of the old man, you understand."

The offer was evidently made in good faith, and Gilbert hesitated, reluctant to accept it, and yet unwilling to reject it in a manner that might seem unfriendly.

"Barton," he said at last, "I've never yet failed to meet a money obligation. All my debts, except this last, have been paid on the day I promised, and it seems a little hard that my own name, alone, should n't be good for as much as I need. Old Fairthorn would give me his indorsement, but I won't ask for it; and I mean no offence when I say that I'd rather get along without yours, if I can. It's kind in you to make the offer, and to show that I'm not ungrateful, I'll beg you to look round among your rich friends and help me to find the loan."

"You're a mighty independent fellow, Gilbert, but I can't say as I blame you for it. Yes, I'll look round in a few days, and maybe I'll stumble on the right man by the time I see you again."

When Gilbert returned home, he communicated this slight prospect of relief to his mother. "Perhaps I am

a little too proud," he said; "but you've always taught me, mother, to be beholden to no man, if I could help it; and I should feel more uneasy under an obligation to Barton than to most other men. You know I must go to Chester in a few days, and must wait till I'm called to testify. There will then be time to look around, and perhaps Mr. Trainer may help me yet."

"You're right, boy!" Mary Potter cried, with flashing eyes. "Keep your pride; it's not of the mean kind! Don't ask for or take any man's indorsement!"

Two days before the time when Gilbert was summoned to Chester, Deb. Smith made her appearance at the farm. She entered the barn early one morning, with a bundle in her hand, and dispatched Sam, whom she found in the stables, to summon his master. She looked old, weather-beaten, and haggard, and her defiant show of strength was gone.

In betraying Sandy Flash into the hands of justice, she had acted from a fierce impulse, without reflecting upon the inevitable consequences of the step. Perhaps she did not suspect that she was also betraying herself, and more than confirming all the worst rumors in regard to her character. In the universal execration which followed the knowledge of her lawless connection with Sandy Flash, and her presumed complicity in his crimes, the merit of her service to the county was lost. The popular mind, knowing nothing of her temptations, struggles, and sufferings, was harsh, cold, and cruel, and she felt the weight of its verdict as never before. A few persons of her own ignorant class, who admired her strength and courage in their coarse way, advised her to hide until the first fury of the storm should be blown over. Thus she exaggerated the danger, and even felt uncertain of her reception by the very man for whose sake she had done the deed and accepted the curse.

Gilbert, however, when he saw her worn, anxious face,

the eyes, like those of a dumb animal, lifted to his with an appeal which she knew not how to speak, felt a pang of compassionate sympathy.

"Deborah!" he said, "you don't look well; come into the house and warm yourself!"

"No!" she cried, "I won't darken your door till you've heerd what I've got to say. Go 'way, Sam; I want to speak to Mr. Gilbert, alone."

Gilbert made a sign, and Sam sprang down the ladder, to the stables under the threshing-floor.

"Mayhap you've heerd already," she said. "A blotch on a body's name spreads fast and far. Mine was black enough before, God knows, but they've blackened it more."

"If all I hear is true," Gilbert exclaimed, "you've blackened it for my sake, Deborah. I'm afraid you thought I blamed you, in some way, for not preventing my loss; but I'm sure you did what you could to save me from it!"

"Ay, lad, that I did! But the devil seemed to ha' got into him. Awful words passed between us, and then — the devil got into *me*, and — you know what follered. He would n't believe the money was your'n, or I don't think he'd ha' took it; he was n't a bad man at heart, Sandy was n't, only stubborn at the wrong times, and brung it onto himself by that. But you know what folks says about me?"

"I don't care what they say, Deborah!" Gilbert cried. "I know that you are a true and faithful friend to me, and I've not had so many such in my life that I'm likely to forget what you've tried to do!"

Her hard, melancholy face became at once eager and tender. She stepped forward, put her hand on Gilbert's arm, and said, in a hoarse, earnest, excited whisper, —

"Then maybe you'll take it? I was almost afeard to ax you, — I thought you might push me away, like the rest

of 'em ; but you 'll take it, and that 'll seem like a liftin' of the curse ! You won't mind how it was got, will you ? I had to git it in that way, because no other was left to me ! ”

“ What do you mean, Deborah ? ”

“ The money, Mr. Gilbert ! They allowed me half, though the constables was for thirds, but the Judge said I 'd arned the full half, — God knows, ten thousand times would n't pay me ! — and I 've got it here, tied up safe. It 's your'n, you know, and maybe there a'n't quite enough, but as fur as it goes ; and I 'll work out the amount o' the rest, from time to time, if you 'll let me come onto your place ! ”

Gilbert was powerfully and yet painfully moved. He forgot his detestation of the relation in which Deb. Smith had stood to the highwayman, in his gratitude for her devotion to himself. He felt an invincible repugnance towards accepting her share of the reward, even as a loan ; it was “ blood-money,” and to touch it in any way was to be stained with its color ; yet how should he put aside her kindness without inflicting pain upon her rude nature, made sensitive at last by abuse, persecution, and remorse ?

His face spoke in advance of his lips, and she read its language with wonderful quickness.

“ Ah ! ” she cried, “ I mistrusted how it 'd be ; you don't want to say it right out, but I 'll say it for you ! You think the money 'd bring you no luck, — maybe a downright curse, — and how can I say it won't ? Ha'n't it cursed me ? Sandy said it would, even as your'n follered him. What 's it good for, then ? It burns my hands, and them that 's clean, won't touch it. There, you damned devil's-bait, — my arm 's sore, and my heart 's sore, wi' the weight o' you ! ”

With these words she flung the cloth, with its bunch of hard silver coins, upon the threshing-floor. It clashed like the sound of chains. Gilbert saw that she was sorely hurt. Tears of disappointment, which she vainly strove to hold

back, rose to her eyes, as she grimly folded her arms, and facing him, said, —

“Now, what am I to do?”

“Stay here for the present, Deborah,” he answered.

“Eh? A’n’t I summonsed? The job I undertook is n’t done yet; the wust part ’s to come! Maybe they ’ll let me off from puttin’ the rope round his neck, but I a’n’t sure o’ that!”

“Then come to me afterwards,” he said, gently, striving to allay her fierce, self-accusing mood. “Remember that you always have a home and a shelter with me, whenever you need them. And I ’ll take your money,” he added, picking it up from the floor, — “take it in trust for you, until the time shall come when you will be willing to use it. Now go in to my mother.”

The woman was softened and consoled by his words. But she still hesitated.

“Maybe she won’t — she wont” —

“She will!” Gilbert exclaimed. “But if you doubt, wait here until I come back.”

Mary Potter earnestly approved of his decision, to take charge of the money, without making use of it. A strong, semi-superstitious influence had so entwined itself with her fate, that she even shrank from help, unless it came in an obviously pure and honorable form. She measured the fulness of her coming justification by the strict integrity of the means whereby she sought to deserve it. Deb. Smith, in her new light, was no welcome guest, and with all her coarse male strength, she was still woman enough to guess the fact; but Mary Potter resolved to think only that her son had been served and befriended. Keeping that service steadily before her eyes, she was able to take the outcast’s hand, to give her shelter and food, and, better still, to soothe her with that sweet, unobtrusive consolation which only a woman can bestow, — which steals by avenues of benevolent cunning into a nature that would repel a direct expression of sympathy.

The next morning, however, Deb. Smith left the house, saying to Gilbert, — “ You won’t see me ag’in, without it may be in Court, till after all ’s over ; and then I may have to ask you to hide me for awhile. Don’t mind what I’ve said ; I’ve no larnin’, and can’t always make out the rights o’ things, — and sometimes it seems there ’s two Sandys, a good ’un and a bad ’un, and meanin to punish one, I’ve ruined ’em both ! ”

When Gilbert reached Chester, the trial was just about to commence. The little old town on the Delaware was crowded with curious strangers, not only from all parts of the county, but even from Philadelphia and the opposite New-Jersey shore. Every one who had been summoned to testify was beset by an inquisitive circle, and none more so than himself. The Court-house was packed to suffocation ; and the Sheriff, heavily armed, could with difficulty force a way through the mass. When the clanking of the prisoner’s irons was heard, all the pushing, struggling, murmuring sounds ceased until the redoubtable highwayman stood in the dock.

He looked around the Court-room with his usual defiant air, and no one observed any change of expression, as his eyes passed rapidly over Deb. Smith’s face, or Gilbert Potter’s. His hard red complexion was already beginning to fade in confinement, and his thick hair, formerly close-cropped for the convenience of disguises, had grown out in not ungraceful locks. He was decidedly a handsome man, and his bearing seemed to show that he was conscious of the fact.

The trial commenced. To the astonishment of all, and, as it was afterwards reported, against the advice of his counsel, the prisoner plead guilty to some of the specifications of the indictment, while he denied others. The Collectors whom he had plundered were then called to the witness-stand, but the public seemed to manifest less interest in the loss of its own money, than in the few cases

where private individuals had suffered, and waited impatiently for the latter.

Deb. Smith had so long borne the curious gaze of hundreds of eyes, whenever she lifted her head, that when her turn came, she was able to rise and walk forward without betraying any emotion. Only when she was confronted with Sandy Flash, and he met her with a wonderfully strange, serious smile, did she shudder for a moment and hastily turn away. She gave her testimony in a hard, firm voice, making her statements as brief as possible, and volunteering nothing beyond what was demanded.

On being dismissed from the stand, she appeared to hesitate. Her eyes wandered over the faces of the lawyers, the judges, and the jurymen, as if with a dumb appeal, but she did not speak. Then she turned towards the prisoner, and some words passed between them, which, in the general movement of curiosity, were only heard by the two or three persons who stood nearest.

"Sandy!" she was reported to have said, "I could n't help myself; take the curse off o' me!"

"Deb., it's too late," he answered. "It's begun to work, and it 'll work itself out!"

Gilbert noticed the feeling of hostility with which Deb. Smith was regarded by the spectators,—a feeling that threatened to manifest itself in some violent way, when the restraints of the place should be removed. He therefore took advantage of the great interest with which his own testimony was heard, to present her character in the light which her services to him shed upon it. This was a new phase of the story, and produced a general movement of surprise. Sandy Flash, it was noticed, sitting with his fettered hands upon the rail before him, leaned forward and listened intently, while an unusual flush deepened upon his cheeks.

The statements, though not strictly in evidence, were permitted by the Court, and they produced the effect which

Gilbert intended. The excitement reached its height when Deb. Smith, ignorant of rule, suddenly rose and cried out, —

“It’s true as Gospel, every word of it! Sandy, do you hear?”

She was removed by the constable, but the people, as they made way, uttered no word of threat or insult. On the contrary, many eyes rested on her hard, violent, wretched face with an expression of very genuine compassion.

The trial took its course, and terminated with the result which everybody — even the prisoner himself — knew to be inevitable. He was pronounced guilty, and duly sentenced to be hanged by the neck until he was dead.

Gilbert employed the time which he could spare from his attendance at the Court, in endeavoring to make a new loan, but with no positive success. The most he accomplished was an agreement, on the part of his creditor, that the foreclosure might be delayed two or three weeks, provided there was a good prospect of the money being obtained. In ordinary times he would have had no difficulty; but, as Mr. Trainer had written, the speculation in western lands had seized upon capitalists, and the amount of money for permanent investment was already greatly diminished.

He was preparing to return home, when Chaffey, the constable, came to him with a message from Sandy Flash. The latter begged for an interview, and both Judge and Sheriff were anxious that Gilbert should comply with his wishes, in the hope that a full and complete confession might be obtained. It was evident that the highwayman had accomplices, but he steadfastly refused to name them, even with the prospect of having his sentence commuted to imprisonment for life.

Gilbert did not hesitate a moment. There were doubts of his own to be solved, — questions to be asked, which

Sandy Flash could alone answer. He followed the constable to the gloomy, high-walled jail-building, and was promptly admitted by the Sheriff into the low, dark, heavily barred cell, wherein the prisoner sat upon a wooden stool, the links of his leg-fetters passed through a ring in the floor.

Sandy Flash lifted his face to the light, and grinned, but not with his old, mocking expression. He stretched out his hand which Gilbert took, — hard and cold as the rattling chain at his wrist. Then, seating himself with a clash upon the floor, he pushed the stool towards his visitor, and said, —

“Set down, Potter. Limited accommodations, you see. Sheriff, you need n’t wait ; it ’s private business.”

The Sheriff locked the iron door behind him, and they were alone.

“Potter,” the highwayman began, “you see I ’m trapped and done for, and all, it seems, on account o’ that little affair o’ your’n. You won’t think it means much, now, when I say I was in the wrong there ; but I swear I was ! I had no particular spite ag’in Barton, but he ’s a swell, and I like to take such fellows down ; and I was dead sure you were carryin’ his money, as you promised to.”

“Tell me one thing,” Gilbert interrupted ; “how did you know I promised to take money for him ?”

“I knowed it, that ’s enough ; I can give you, word for word, what both o’ you said, if you doubt me.”

“Then, as I thought, it was Barton himself !” Gilbert cried.

Sandy Flash burst into a roaring laugh. “*Him !* Ah-ha ! you think we go snacks, eh ? Do I look like a fool ? Barton ’d give his eye-teeth to put the halter round my neck with his own hands ! No, no, young man ; I have ways and ways o’ learnin’ things that you nor him ’ll never guess.”

His manner, even more than his words, convinced Gil

bert. Barton was absolved, but the mystery remained
“ You won’t deny that you have friends ? ” he said.

“ Maybe,” Sandy replied, in a short, rough tone. “ That ’s nothin’ to you,” he continued ; “ but what I ’ve got to say is, whether or no you ’re a friend to Deb., she thinks you are. Do you mean to look after her, once’t in a while, or are you one o’ them that forgits a good turn ? ”

“ I have told her,” said Gilbert, “ that she shall always have a home and a shelter in my house. If it ’s any satisfaction to you, here ’s my hand on it ! ”

“ I believe you, Potter. Deb. ’s done ill by me ; she should n’t ha’ bullied me when I was sore and tetchy, and fagged out with *your* curst huntin’ of me up and down ! But I ’ll do that much for her and for you. Here ; bend your head down ; I ’ve got to whisper.”

Gilbert leaned his ear to the highwayman’s mouth.

“ You ’ll only tell *her*, you understand ? ”

Gilbert assented.

“ Say to her these words, — don’t forgit a single one of ’em ! — Thirty steps from the place she knowed about, behind the two big chestnut-trees, goin’ towards the first cedar, and a forked sassyfrack growin’ right over it. What she finds, is your’n.”

“ Sandy ! ” Gilbert exclaimed, starting from his listening posture.

“ Hush, I say ! You know what I mean her to do, — give you your money back. I took a curse with it, as you said. Maybe that ’s off o’ me, now ! ”

“ It is ! ” said Gilbert, in a low tone, “ and forgiveness — mine and my mother’s — in the place of it. Have you any ” — he hesitated to say the words — “ any last messages, to her or anybody else, or anything you would like to have done ? ”

“ Thank ye, no ! — unless Deb. can find my black hair and whiskers. Then you may give ’em to Barton, with my dutiful service.”

He laughed at the idea, until his chains rattled.

Gilbert's mind was haunted with the other and darker doubt, and he resolved, in this last interview, to secure himself against its recurrence. In such an hour he could trust the prisoner's words.

"Sandy," he asked, "have you any children?"

"Not to my knowledge; and I'm glad of it."

"You must know," Gilbert continued, "what the people say about my birth. My mother is bound from telling me who my father was, and I dare not ask her any questions. Did you ever happen to know her, in your younger days, or can you remember anything that will help me to discover his name?"

The highwayman sat silent, meditating, and Gilbert felt that his heart was beginning to beat painfully fast, as he waited for the answer.

"Yes," said Sandy, at last, "I did know Mary Potter when I was a boy, and she knowed me, under another name. I may say I liked her, too, in a boy's way, but she was older by three or four years, and never thought o' lookin' at me. But I can't remember anything more; if I was out o' this, I'd soon find out for you!"

He looked up with an eager, questioning glance, which Gilbert totally misunderstood.

"What was your other name?" he asked, in a barely audible voice.

"I dunno as I need tell it," Sandy answered; "what 'd be the good? There 's some yet livin', o' the same name, and they would n't thank me."

"Sandy!" Gilbert cried desperately, "answer this one question,—don't go out of the world with a false word in your mouth!—You are not my father?"

The highwayman looked at him a moment, in blank amazement. "No, so help me God!" he then said.

Gilbert's face brightened so suddenly and vividly that Sandy muttered to himself,— "I never thortht I was that bad."

"I hear the Sheriff at the outside gate," he whispered again. "Don't forgit — thirty steps from the place she knowed about — behind the two big chestnut-trees, goin' towards the first cedar — and a forked sassyfrack growin' right over it! Good-bye, and good-luck to the whole o' your life!"

The two clasped hands with a warmth and earnestness which surprised the Sheriff. Then Gilbert went out from his old antagonist.

That night Sandy Flash made an attempt to escape from the jail, and very nearly succeeded. It appeared, from some mysterious words which he afterwards let fall, and which Gilbert alone could have understood, that he had a superstitious belief that something he had done would bring him a new turn of fortune. The only result of the attempt was to hasten his execution. Within ten days from that time he was transformed from a living terror into a romantic name.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GILBERT INDEPENDENT.

GILBERT POTTER felt such an implicit trust in Sandy Flash's promise of restitution, that, before leaving Chester, he announced the forthcoming payment of the mortgage to its holder. His homeward ride was like a triumphal march, to which his heart beat the music. The chill March winds turned into May-breezes as they touched him; the brown meadows were quick with ambushed bloom. Within three or four months his life had touched such extremes of experience, that the fate yet to come seemed to evolve itself speedily and naturally from that which was over and gone. Only one obstacle yet remained in his path, — his mother's secret. Towards that he was powerless; to meet all others he was brimming with strength and courage.

Mary Potter recognized, even more keenly and with profounder faith than her son, the guidance of some inscrutable Power. She did not dare to express so uncertain a hope, but something in her heart whispered that the day of her own deliverance was not far off, and she took strength from it.

It was nearly a week before Deb. Smith made her appearance. Gilbert, in the mean time, had visited her cabin on the Woodrow farm, to find it deserted, and he was burning with impatience to secure, through her, the restoration of his independence. He would not announce his changed prospects, even to Martha Deane, until they were put beyond further risk. The money once in his hands, he determined to carry it to Chester without loss of time.

When Deb. arrived, she had a weary, hunted look, but she was unusually grave and silent, and avoided further reference to the late tragical episode in her life. Nevertheless, Gilbert led her aside and narrated to her the particulars of his interview with Sandy Flash. Perhaps he softened, with pardonable equivocation, the latter's words in regard to her; perhaps he conveyed a sense of forgiveness which had not been expressed; for Deb. more than once drew the corners of her hard palms across her eyes. When he gave the marks by which she was to recognize a certain spot, she exclaimed, —

“It was hid the night I dreamt of him! I knowed he must ha' been nigh, by that token. O, Mr. Gilbert, he said true! I know the place; it's not so far away; this very night you'll have y'r money back!”

After it was dark she set out, with a spade upon her shoulder, forbidding him to follow, or even to look after her. Both mother and son were too excited to sleep. They sat by the kitchen-fire, with one absorbing thought in their minds, and speech presently became easier than silence.

“Mother,” said Gilbert, “when — I mean *if* — she brings the money, all that has happened will have been for good. It has proved to us that we have true friends (and I count my Roger among them), and I think that our independence will be worth all the more, since we came so nigh losing it again.”

“Ay, my boy,” she replied; “I was over-hasty, and have been lessoned. When I bend my mind to submit, I make more headway than when I try to take the Lord's work into my own hands. I'm fearsome still, but it seems there's a light coming from somewhere, — I don't know where.”

“Do you feel that way, mother?” he exclaimed. “Do you think — let me mention it this once! — that the day is near when you will be free to speak? Will there be

anything more you can tell me, when we stand free upon our own property?"

Mary Potter looked upon his bright, wistful, anxious face, and sighed. "I can't tell — I can't tell," she said. "Ah, my boy, you would understand it, if I dared say one thing, but that might lead you to guess what must n't be told; and I will be faithful to the spirit as well as the letter. It must come soon, but nothing you or I can do would hasten it a minute."

"One word more, mother," he persisted, "will our independence be no help to you?"

"A great help," she answered, "or, maybe, a great comfort would be the true word. Without it, I might be tempted to — but see, Gilbert, how can I talk? Everything you say pulls at the one thing that cuts my mouth like a knife, because it's shut tight on it! And the more because I owe it to you, — because I'm held back from my duty to my child, — maybe, every day putting a fresh sorrow into his heart! Oh, it's not easy, Gilbert; it don't grow lighter from use, only my faith is the stronger and surer, and that helps me to bear it."

"Mother, I meant never to have spoken of this again," he said. "But you're mistaken; it is no sorrow; I never knew what it was to have a light heart, until you told me your trouble, and the question came to my mouth to-night because I shall soon feel strong in my own right as a man, and able to do more than you might guess. If, as you say, no man can help you, I will wait and be patient with you."

"That's all we can do now, my child. I was n't reproaching you for speaking, for you've held your peace a long while, when I know you've been fretting; but this is n't one of the troubles that's lightened by speech, because all talking must go around the outside, and never touch the thing itself."

"I understand," he said, and gazed for a long time into the fire, without speaking.

Mary Potter watched his face, in the wavering light of the flame. She marked the growing decision of the features, the forward, fearless glance of the large, deep-set eye, the fuller firmness and sweetness of the mouth, and the general expression, not only of self-reliance, but of authority, which was spread over the entire countenance. Both her pride in her son, and her respect for him, increased as she gazed. Heretofore, she had rather considered her secret as her own property, her right to which he should not question; but now it seemed as if she were forced to withhold something that of right belonged to him. Yet no thought that the mysterious obligation might be broker ever entered her mind.

Gilbert was thinking of Martha Deane. He had passed that first timidity of love which shrinks from the knowledge of others, and longed to tell his mother what noble fidelity and courage Martha had exhibited. Only the recollection of the fearful swoon into which she had fallen bound his tongue; he felt that the first return to the subject must come from her. She lay back in her chair and seemed to sleep; he rose from time to time, went out into the lane and listened, — and so the hours passed away.

Towards midnight a heavy step was heard, and Deb. Smith, hot, panting, her arms daubed with earth, and a wild light in her eyes, entered the kitchen. With one hand she grasped the ends of her strong tow-linen apron, with the other she still shouldered the spade. She knelt upon the floor between the two, set the apron in the light of the fire, unrolled the end of a leathern saddle-bag, and disclosed the recovered treasure.

“See if it’s all right!” she said.

Mary Potter and Gilbert bent over the rolls and counted them. It was the entire sum, untouched.

“Have you got a sup o’ whiskey, Mr. Gilbert?” Deb. Smith asked. “Ugh! I’m hot and out o’ breath, and yet I feel mortal cold. There was a screech-owl hootin’ in the

cedar ; and I dunno how 't is, but there always seems to be things around, where money 's buried. You can't see 'em, but you hear 'em. I thought I 'd ha' dropped when I turned up the sassyfrack bush, and got hold on it ; and all the way back I feared a big arm 'd come out o' every fence-corner, and snatch it from me ! ”¹

Mary Potter set the kettle on the fire, and Deb. Smith was soon refreshed with a glass of hot grog. Then she lighted her pipe and watched the two as they made preparations for the journey to Chester on the morrow, now and then nodding her head with an expression which chased away the haggard sorrow from her features.

This time the journey was performed without incident. The road was safe, the skies were propitious, and Gilbert Potter returned from Chester an independent man, with the redeemed mortgage in his pocket. His first care was to assure his mother of the joyous fact ; his next to seek Martha Deane, and consult with her about their brightening future.

On the way to Kennett Square, he fell in with Mark, who was radiant with the promise of Richard Rudd's new house, secured to him by the shrewd assistance of Miss Betsy Lavender.

“ I tell you what it is, Gilbert,” said he ; “ don't you think I might as well speak to Daddy Fairthorn about Sally ? I 'm gettin' into good business now, and I guess th' old folks might spare her pretty soon.”

“ The sooner, Mark, the better for you ; and you can buy the wedding-suit at once, for I have your hundred dollars ready.”

“ You don't mean that you wont use it, Gilbert ? ”

Who so delighted as Mark, when he heard Gilbert's

¹ It does not seem to have been generally known in the neighborhood that the money was unearthed. A tradition of that and other treasure buried by Sandy Flash, is still kept alive ; and during the past ten years two midnight attempts have been made to find it, within a hundred yards of the spot indicated in the narrative.

unexpected story? "Oh, glory!" he exclaimed; "the tide 's turnin', old fellow! What 'll you bet you 're not married before I am? It 's got all over the country that you and Martha are engaged, and that the Doctor 's full o' gall and wormwood about it; I hear it wherever I go, and there 's more for you than there is against you, I tell you that!"

The fact was as Mark had stated. No one was positively known to have spread the rumor, but it was afloat and generally believed. The result was to invest Gilbert with a fresh interest. His courage in confronting Sandy Flash, his robbery, his wonderful preservation from death and his singular connection, through Deb. Smith, with Sandy Flash's capture, had thrown a romantic halo around his name, which was now softly brightened by the report of his love. The stain of his birth and the uncertainty of his parentage did not lessen this interest, but rather increased it; and as any man who is much talked about in a country community will speedily find two parties created, one enthusiastically admiring, the other contemptuously depreciating him, so now it happened in this case.

The admirers, however, were in a large majority, and they possessed a great advantage over the detractors, being supported by a multitude of facts, while the latter were unable to point to any act of Gilbert Potter's life that was not upright and honorable. Even his love of Martha Deane was shorn of its presumption by her reciprocal affection. The rumor that she had openly defied her father's will created great sympathy, for herself and for Gilbert, among the young people of both sexes,—a sympathy which frequently was made manifest to Dr. Deane, and annoyed him not a little. His stubborn opposition to his daughter's attachment increased, in proportion as his power to prevent it diminished.

We may therefore conceive his sensations when Gilbert Potter himself boldly entered his presence. The latter

after Mark's description, very imperfect though it was, of Martha's courageous assertion of the rights of her heart, had swiftly made up his mind to stand beside her in the struggle, with equal firmness and equal pride. He would openly seek an interview with her, and if he should find her father at home, as was probable at that hour, would frankly and respectfully acknowledge his love, and defend it against any attack.

On entering the room, he quietly stepped forward with extended hand, and saluted the Doctor, who was so taken by surprise that he mechanically answered the greeting before he could reflect what manner to adopt towards the unwelcome visitor.

"What might be thy business with me?" he asked, stiffly, recovering from the first shock.

"I called to see Martha," Gilbert answered. "I have some news which she will be glad to hear."

"Young man," said the Doctor, with his sternest face and voice, "I may as well come to the point with thee, at once. If thee had had decency enough to apply to me before speaking thy mind to Martha, it would have saved us all a great deal of trouble. I could have told thee then, as I tell thee now, that I will never consent to her marriage with thee. Thee must give up all thought of such a thing."

"I will do so," Gilbert replied, "when Martha tells me with her own mouth that such is her will. I am not one of the men who manage their hearts according to circumstances. I wish, indeed, I were more worthy of Martha; but I am trying to deserve her, and I know no better way than to be faithful as she is faithful. I mean no disrespect to you, Dr. Deane. You are her father; you have every right to care for her happiness, and I will admit that you honestly think I am not the man who could make her happy. All I ask is, that you should wait a little and know me better. Martha and I have both decided that we must

wait, and there is time enough for you to watch my conduct, examine my character, and perhaps come to a more favorable judgment of me."

Dr. Deane saw that it would be harder to deal with Gilbert Potter than he had imagined. The young man stood before him so honestly and fearlessly, meeting his angry gaze with such calm, frank eyes, and braving his despotic will with such a modest, respectful opposal, that he was forced to withdraw from his haughty position, and to set forth the same reasons which he had presented to his daughter.

"I see," he said, with a tone slightly less arrogant, "that thee is sensible, in some respects, and therefore I put the case to thy understanding. It's too plain to be argued. Martha is a rich bait for a poor man, and perhaps I ought n't to wonder — knowing the heart of man as I do — that thee was tempted to turn her head to favor thee; but the money is not yet hers, and I, as her father, can never allow that thy poverty shall stand for three years between her and some honorable man to whom her money would be no temptation! Why, if all I hear be true, thee has n't even any certain roof to shelter a wife; thy property, such as it is, may be taken out of thy hands!"

Gilbert could not calmly hear these insinuations. All his independent pride of character was aroused; a dark flush came into his face, the blood was pulsing hotly through his veins, and indignant speech was rising to his lips, when the inner door unexpectedly opened, and Martha entered the room.

She instantly guessed what was taking place, and summoned up all her self-possession, to stand by Gilbert, without increasing her father's exasperation. To the former, her apparition was like oil on troubled waters. His quick blood struck into warm channels of joy, as he met her glowing eyes, and felt the throb of her soft, elastic palm.

against his own. Dr. Deane set his teeth, drew up his under lip, and handled his cane with restless fingers.

"Father," said Martha, "if you are talking of me, it is better that I should be present. I am sure there is nothing that either thee or Gilbert would wish to conceal from me."

"No, Martha!" Gilbert exclaimed; "I came to bring you good news. The mortgage on my farm is lifted, and I am an independent man!"

"Without my help! Does thee hear that, father?"

Gilbert did not understand her remark; without heeding it, he continued, —

"Sandy Flash, after his sentence, sent for me and told me where the money he took from me was to be found. I carried it to Chester, and have paid off all my remaining debt. Martha, your father has just charged me with being tempted by your property. I say to you, in his presence, put it beyond my reach, — give it away, forfeit the conditions of the legacy, — let me show truly whether I ever thought of money in seeking you!"

"Gilbert," she said, gently, "father does n't yet know you as I do. Others will no doubt say the same thing, and we must both make up our minds to have it said; yet I cannot, for that, relinquish what is mine of right. We are not called upon to sacrifice to the mistaken opinions of men; your life and mine will show, and manifest to others in time, whether it is a selfish tie that binds us together."

"Martha!" Dr. Deane exclaimed, feeling that he should lose ground, unless this turn of the conversation were interrupted; "thee compels me to show thee how impossible the thing is, even if this man were of the richest. Admitting that he is able to support a family, admitting that thee waits three years, comes into thy property, and is still of a mind to marry him against my will, can thee forget — or has he so little consideration for thee as to forget — that he bears his mother's name?"

“Father !”

“Let me speak, Martha,” said Gilbert, lifting his head, which had drooped for a moment. His voice was earnest and sorrowful, yet firm. “It is true that I bear my mother’s name. It is the name of a good, an honest, an honorable, and a God-fearing woman. I wish I could be certain that the name which legally belongs to me will be as honorable and as welcome. But Martha knows, and you, her father, have a right to know, that I shall have another. I have not been inconsiderate. I trampled down my love for her, as long as I believed it would bring disgrace. I will not say that now, knowing her as I do, I could ever give her up, even if the disgrace was not removed,” —

“Thank you, Gilbert !” Martha interrupted.

“But there is none, Dr. Deane,” he continued, “and when the time comes, my birth will be shown to be as honorable as your own, or Mark’s.”

Dr. Deane was strangely excited at these words. His face colored, and he darted a piercing, suspicious glance at Gilbert. The latter, however, stood quietly before him, too possessed by what he had said to notice the Doctor’s peculiar expression ; but it returned to his memory afterwards.

“Why,” the Doctor at last stammered, “I never heard of this before !”

“No,” Gilbert answered, “and I must ask of you not to mention it further, at present. I must beg you to be patient until my mother is able to declare the truth.”

“What keeps her from it ?”

“I don’t know,” Gilbert sadly replied.

“Come !” cried the Doctor, as sternly as ever, “this is rather a likely story ! If Potter is n’t thy name, what is ?”

“I don’t know,” Gilbert repeated.

“No ; nor no one else ! How dare thee address my daughter, — talk of marriage with her, — when thee don’t

know thy real name? What name would thee offer to her in exchange for her own? Young man, I don't believe thee!"

"I do," said Martha, rising and moving to Gilbert's side.

"Martha, go to thy room!" the Doctor cried. "And as for thee, Gilbert Potter, or Gilbert Anything, I tell thee, once and for all, never speak of this thing again, — at least, until thee can show a legal name and an honorable birth! Thee has not prejudiced me in thy favor by thy devices, and it stands to reason that I should forbid thee to see my daughter, — to enter my doors!"

"Dr. Deane," said Gilbert, with sad yet inflexible dignity, "it is impossible, after what you have said, that I should seek to enter your door, until my words are proved true, and I am justified in your eyes. The day may come sooner than you think. But I will do nothing secretly; I won't promise anything to you that I can't promise to myself; and so I tell you, honestly and above-board, that while I shall not ask Martha to share my life until I can offer her my true name, I must see her from time to time. I'm not fairly called upon to give up that."

"No, Gilbert," said Martha, who had not yet moved from her place by his side, "it is as necessary to my happiness as to yours. I will not ask you to come here again; you cannot, and must not, even for my sake; but when I need your counsel and your sympathy, and there is no other way left, I will go to you."

"Martha!" Dr. Deane exclaimed; but the word conveys no idea of his wrath and amazement.

"Father," she said, "this is thy house, and it is for thee to direct, here. Within its walls, I will conduct myself according to thy wishes; I will receive no guest whom thee forbids, and will even respect thy views in regard to my intercourse with our friends; but unless thee wants to deprive me of all liberty, and set aside every right of mine

as an accountable being, thee must allow me sometimes to do what both my heart and my conscience command ! ”

“ Is it a woman’s place,” he angrily asked, “ to visit a man ? ”

“ When the two have need of each other, and God has joined their hearts in love and in truth, and the man is held back from reaching the woman, then it is her place to go to him ! ”

Never before had Dr. Deane beheld upon his daughter’s sweet, gentle face such an expression of lofty spiritual authority. While her determination really outraged his conventional nature, he felt that it came from a higher source than his prohibition. He knew that nothing which he could urge at that moment would have the slightest weight in her mind, and moreover, that the liberal, independent customs of the neighborhood, as well as the respect of his sect for professed spiritual guidance, withheld him from any harsh attempt at coercion. He was powerless, but still inflexible.

As for Martha, what she had said was simply included in what she was resolved to do ; the greater embraced the less. It was a defiance of her father’s authority, very painful from the necessity of its assertion, but rendered inevitable by his course. She knew with what tenacity he would seize and hold every inch of relinquished ground ; she felt, as keenly as Gilbert himself, the implied insult which he could not resent ; and her pride, her sense of justice, and the strong fidelity of her woman’s heart, alike impelled her to stand firm.

“ Good-bye, Martha ! ” Gilbert said, taking her hand
“ I must wait.”

“ We wait together, Gilbert ! ”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISS LAVENDER MAKES A GUESS.

THERE were signs of spring all over the land, and Gilbert resumed his farm-work with the fresh zest which the sense of complete ownership gave. He found a purchaser for his wagon, sold one span of horses, and thus had money in hand for all the coming expenses of the year. His days of hauling, of anxiety, of painful economy, were over; he rejoiced in his fully developed and recognized manhood, and was cheered by the respect and kindly sympathy of his neighbors.

Meanwhile, the gossip, not only of Kennett, but of Marlborough, Pennsbury, and New-Garden, was as busy as ever. No subject of country talk equalled in interest the loves of Gilbert Potter and Martha Deane. Mark, too open-hearted to be intrusted with any secret, was drawn upon wherever he went, and he revealed more (although he was by no means Martha's confidant) than the public had any right to know. The idlers at the Unicorn had seen Gilbert enter Dr. Deane's house, watched his return therefrom, made shrewd notes of the Doctor's manner when he came forth that evening, and guessed the result of the interview almost as well as if they had been present.

The restoration of Gilbert's plundered money, and his hardly acquired independence as a landholder, greatly strengthened the hands of his friends. There is no logic so convincing as that of good luck; in proportion as a man is fortunate (so seems to run the law of the world), he attracts fortune to him. A good deed would not have

helped Gilbert so much in popular estimation, as this sudden and unexpected release from his threatened difficulties. The blot upon his name was already growing fainter, and a careful moral arithmetician might have calculated the point of prosperity at which it would cease to be seen.

Nowhere was the subject discussed with greater interest and excitement than in the Fairthorn household. Sally, when she first heard the news, loudly protested her unbelief; why, the two would scarcely speak to each other, she said; she had seen Gilbert turn his back on Martha, as if he could n't bear the sight of her; it ought to be, and she would be glad if it was, but it was n't!

When, therefore, Mark confirmed the report, and was led on, by degrees, to repeat Gilbert's own words, Sally rushed out into the kitchen with a vehemence which left half her apron hanging on the door-handle, torn off from top to bottom in her whirling flight, and announced the fact to her mother.

Joe, who was present, immediately cried out, —

“O, Sally! now I may tell about Mark, may n't I?”

Sally seized him by the collar, and pitched him out the kitchen-door. Her face was the color of fire.

“My gracious, Sally!” exclaimed Mother Fairthorn, in amazement; “what's that for?”

But Sally had already disappeared, and was relating her trouble to Mark, who roared with wicked laughter, whereupon she nearly cried with vexation.

“Never mind,” said he; “the boy's right. I told Gilbert this very afternoon that it was about time to speak to the old man; and he allowed it was. Come out with me and don't be afeard — I'll do the talkin'.”

Hand in hand they went into the kitchen, Sally blushing and hanging back a little. Farmer Fairthorn had just come in from the barn, and was warming his hands at the fire. Mother Fairthorn might have had her suspicions, but it was her nature to wait cheerfully, and say nothing.

"See here, Daddy and Mammy!" said Mark, "have either o' you any objections to Sally and me bein' a pair?"

Farmer Fairthorn smiled, rubbed his hands together and turning to his wife, asked, — "What has Mammy to say to it?"

She looked up at Mark with her kindly eyes, in which twinkled something like a tear, and said, — "I was guessin it might turn out so between you two, and if I'd had anything against you, Mark, I would n't ha' let it run on. Be a steady boy, and you'll make Sally a steady woman. She's had pretty much her own way."

Thereupon Farmer Fairthorn, still rubbing his hands, ventured to remark, — "The girl might ha' done worse." This was equivalent to a hearty commendation of the match, and Mark so understood it. Sally kissed her mother, cried a little, caught her gown on a corner of the kitchen-table, and thus the betrothal was accepted as a family fact. Joe and Jake somewhat disturbed the bliss of the evening, it is true, by bursting into the room from time to time, staring significantly at the lovers, and then rushing out again with loud whoops and laughter.

Sally could scarcely await the coming of the next day, to visit Martha Deane. At first she felt a little piqued that she had not received the news from Martha's own lips, but this feeling speedily vanished in the sympathy with her friend's trials. She was therefore all the more astonished at the quiet, composed bearing of the latter. The tears she had expected to shed were not once drawn upon.

"O, Martha!" she cried, after the first impetuous outburst of feeling, — "to think that it has all turned out just as I wanted! No, I don't quite mean that; you know I could n't wish you to have crosses; but about Gilbert And it's too bad — Mark has told me dreadful things, but I hope they're not all true; you don't look like it and I'm so glad, you can't think!"

Martha smiled, readily untangling Sally's thoughts, and said, — "I must n't complain, Sally. Nothing has come to pass that I had not prepared my mind to meet. We will only have to wait a little longer than you and Mark."

"No you won't!" Sally exclaimed. "I'll make Mark wait, too! And everything must be set right — somebody must do something! Where's Betsy Lavender?"

"Here!" answered the veritable voice of the spinster, through the open door of the small adjoining room.

"Gracious, how you frightened me!" cried Sally. "But, Betsy, you seem to be able to help everybody; why can't you do something for Martha and Gilbert?"

"Martha and Gilbert. That's what I ask myself, nigh onto a hundred times a day, child. But there's things that takes the finest kind o' wit to see through, and you can't make a bead-purse out of a sow's-ear, neither jerk Time by the forelock, when there a'n't a hair, as you can see, to hang on to. I dunno as you'll rightly take my meanin'; but never mind, all the same, I'm flummuxed, and it's the longest and hardest flummux o' my life!"

Miss Betsy Lavender, it must here be explained, was more profoundly worried than she was willing to admit. Towards Martha she concealed the real trouble of her mind under the garb of her quaint, jocular speech, which meant much or little, as one might take it. She had just returned from one of her social pilgrimages, during which she had heard nothing but the absorbing subject of gossip. She had been questioned and cross-questioned, entreated by many, as Sally had done, to do something (for all had great faith in her powers), and warned by a few not to meddle with what did not concern her. Thus she had come back that morning, annoyed, discomposed, and more dissatisfied with herself than ever before, to hear Martha's recital of what had taken place during her absence.

In spite of Martha's steady patience and cheerfulness, Miss Lavender knew that the painful relation in which she

stood to her father would not be assuaged by the lapse of time. She understood Dr. Deane's nature quite as well as his daughter, and was convinced that, for the present, neither threats nor persuasions would move his stubborn resistance. According to the judgment of the world (the older part of it, at least), he had still right on his side. Facts were wanted; or, rather, the *one* fact upon which resistance was based must be removed.

With all this trouble, Miss Lavender had a presentiment that there was work for her to do, if she could only discover what it was. Her faith in her own powers of assistance was somewhat shaken, and she therefore resolved to say nothing, promise nothing, until she had both hit upon a plan and carried it into execution.

Two or three days after Sally's visit, on a mild, sunny morning in the beginning of April, she suddenly announced her intention of visiting the Potter farm-house.

"I ha' n't seen Mary since last fall, you know, Martha," she said; "and I've a mortal longin' to wish Gilbert joy o' his good luck, and maybe say a word to keep him in good heart about you. Have you got no message to send by me?"

"Only my love," Martha answered; "and tell him how you left me. He knows I will keep my word; when I need his counsel, I will go to him."

"If more girls talked and thought that way, us women'd have fairer shakes," Miss Lavender remarked, as she put on her cloak and pattens.

When she reached the top of the hill overlooking the glen, she noticed fresh furrows in the field on her left. Clambering through the fence, she waited until the heads of a pair of horses made their appearance, rising over the verge of the hill. As she conjectured, Gilbert Potter was behind them, guiding the plough-handle. He was heartily glad to see her, and halted his team at the corner of the "land."

"I did n't know as you 'd speak to me," said she, with assumed grimness. "Maybe you would n't, if I did n't come direct from *her*. Ah, you need n't look wild; it 's only her love, and what 's the use, for you had it already; but never mind, lovyers is never satisfied; and she 's chipper and peart enough, seein' what she has to bear for your sake, but she don't mind that, on the contràry, quite the reverse, and I 'm sure you don't deserve it!"

"Did she tell you what passed between us, the last time?" Gilbert asked.

"The last time. Yes. And jokin' aside, which often means the contràry in my crooked ways o' talkin', a'n't it about time somethin' was done?"

"What can be done?"

"I dunno," said Miss Lavender, gravely. "You know as well as I do what 's in the way, or rather none of us knows *what* it is, only *where* it is; and a thing unbeknown may be big or little; who can tell? And latterly I 've thought, Gilbert, that maybe your mother is in the fix of a man I 've heerd tell on, that fell into a pit, and ketched by the last bush, and hung on, and hung on, till he could hold on no longer; so he gev himself up to death, shet his eyes and let go, and lo and behold! the bottom was a matter o' six inches under his feet! Leastways, everything p'int's to a sort o' skeary fancy bein' mixed up with it, not a thing to laugh at, I can tell you, but as earnest as sin, for I 've seen the likes, and maybe easy to make straight if you could only look into it yourself; but you think there 's no chance o' that?"

"No," said Gilbert. "I 've tried once too often, already; I shall not try again."

"Try again," Miss Lavender repeated. "Then why not?" — but here she paused, and seemed to meditate. The fact was, she had been tempted to ask Gilbert's advice in regard to the plan she was revolving in her brain. The tone of his voice, however, was discouraging; she saw

that he had taken a firm and gloomy resolution to be silent, — his uneasy air hinted that he desired to avoid further talk on this point. So, with a mental reprimand of the indiscretion into which her sympathy with him had nearly betrayed her, she shut her teeth and slightly bit her tongue.

“Well, well,” she said; “I hope it ’ll come out before you ’re both old and sour with waitin’, that ’s all! I don’t want such true-love as your’n to be like firkin-butter at th’ end; for as fresh, and firm, and well-kep’ as you please, it ha’n’t got the taste o’ the clover and the sweet-grass; but who knows? I may dance at your weddin’, after all, sooner ’n I mistrust; and so I ’m goin’ down to spend the day with y’r mother!”

She strode over the furrow and across the weedy sod, and Gilbert resumed his ploughing. As she approached the house, Miss Lavender noticed that the secured ownership of the property was beginning to express itself in various slight improvements and adornments. The space in front of the porch was enlarged, and new flower-borders set along the garden-paling; the barn had received a fresh coat of whitewash, as well as the trunks of the apple-trees, which shone like white pillars; and there was a bench with bright straw bee-hives under the lilac-bush. Mary Potter was at work in the garden, sowing her early seeds.

“Well, I do declare!” exclaimed Miss Lavender, after the first cordial greetings were over. “Seems almost like a different place, things is so snuggled up and put to rights.”

“Yes,” said Mary Potter; “I had hardly the heart, before, to make it everything that we wanted; and you can’t think what a satisfaction I have in it now.”

“Yes, I can! Give me the redishes, while you stick in them beets. I ’ve got a good forefinger for plantin’ ’em, — long and stiff; and I can’t stand by and see you workin’ alone, without fidgets.”

Miss Lavender threw off her cloak and worked with a will. When the gardening was finished, she continued her assistance in the house, and fully earned her dinner before she sat down to it. Then she insisted on Mary Potter bringing out her sewing, and giving her something more to do; it was one of her working-days, she said; she had spent rather an idle winter; and moreover, she was in such spirits at Gilbert's good fortune, that she could n't be satisfied without doing something for him, and to sew up the seams of his new breeches was the very thing! Never had she been so kind, so cheerful, and so helpful, and Mary Potter's nature warmed into happy content in her society.

No one should rashly accuse Miss Lavender if there was a little design in this. The task she had set herself to attempt was both difficult and delicate. She had divided it into two portions, requiring very different tactics, and was shrewd enough to mask, in every possible way, the one from which she had most hopes of obtaining a result. She made no reference, at first, to Gilbert's attachment to Martha Deane, but seemed to be wholly absorbed in the subject of the farm; then, taking wide sweeps through all varieties of random gossip, preserving a careless, thoughtless, rattling manner, she stealthily laid her pitfalls for the unsuspecting prey.

"I was over 't Warren's t' other day," she said, biting off a thread, "and Becky had jist come home from Philidelpy. There 's new-fashioned bonnets comin' up, she says. She stayed with Allen's, but who they are I don't know. Laws! now I think on it, Mary, you stayed at Allen's, too, when you were there!"

"No," said Mary Potter, "it was at — Treadwell's."

"Treadwell's? I thought you told me Allen's. All the same to me, Allen or Treadwell; I don't know either of 'em. It's a long while since I've been in Philidelpy, and never likely to go ag'in. I don't fancy trampin' over them

hard bricks, though, to be sure, a body sees the fashions but what with boxes tumbled in and out o' the stores, and bar'ls rollin', and carts always goin' by, you 're never sure o' y'r neck ; and I was sewin' for Clarissa Lee, Jackson that was, that married a dry goods man, the noisiest place that ever was ; you could hardly hear yourself talk ; but a body gets used to it, in Second Street, close't to Market, and were you anywheres near there ? ”

“ I was in Fourth Street,” Mary Potter answered, with a little hesitation. Miss Lavender secretly noticed her uneasiness, which, she also remarked, arose not from suspicion, but from memory.

“ What kind o' buttons are you goin' to have, Mary ? ” she asked. “ Horn splits, and brass cuts the stuff, and mother o' pearl wears to eternity, but they 're so awful dear. Fourth Street, you said ? One street 's like another to me, after you get past the corners. I 'd always know Second, though, by the tobacco-shop, with the wild Injun at the door, liftin' his tommyhawk to skulp you — ugh ! — but never mind, all the same, skulp away for what I care, for I a'n't likely ever to lay eyes on you ag'in ! ”

Having thus, with perhaps more volubility than was required, covered up the traces of her design, Miss Lavender cast about how to commence the second and more hopeless attack. It was but scant intelligence which she had gained, but in that direction she dared not venture further. What she now proposed to do required more courage and less cunning.

Her manner gradually changed ; she allowed lapses of silence to occur, and restricted her gossip to a much narrower sweep. She dwelt, finally, upon the singular circumstances of Sandy Flash's robbery of Gilbert, and the restoration of the money.

“ Talkin' o' Deb. Smith,” she then said, “ Mary, do you mind when I was here last harvest, and the talk we had about Gilbert ? I 've often thought on it since, and how I

guessed right for once't, for I know the ways o' men, if I am an old maid, and so it's come out as I said, and a finer couple than they'll make can't be found in the county!"

Mary Potter looked up, with a shadow of the old trouble on her face. "You know all about it, Betsy, then?" she asked.

"Bless your soul, Mary, everybody knows about it! There's been nothin' else talked about in the neighborhood for the last three weeks; why, ha' n't Gilbert told you o' what passed between him and Dr. Deane, and how Martha stood by him as no woman ever stood by a man?"

An expression of painful curiosity, such as shrinks from the knowledge it craves, came into Mary Potter's eyes. "Gilbert has told me nothing," she said, "since—since that time."

"That time. I won't ask you *what* time; it's neither here nor there; but you ought to know the run o' things, when it's common talk." And therewith Miss Lavender began at the beginning, and never ceased until she had brought the history, in all its particulars, down to that very day. She did not fail to enlarge on the lively and universal interest in the fortunes of the lovers which was manifested by the whole community. Mary Potter's face grew paler and paler as she spoke, but the tears which some parts of the recital called forth were quenched again, as it seemed, by flashes of aroused pride.

"Now," Miss Lavender concluded, "you see just how the matter stands. I'm not hard on you, savin' and exceptin' that facts is hard, which they sometimes are I don't deny; but here we're all alone with our two selves, and you'll grant I'm a friend, though I may have queer ways o' showin' it; and why should n't I say that all the trouble comes o' Gilbert bearin' your name?"

"Don't I know it!" Mary Potter cried. "Is n't my load heaped up heavier as it comes towards the end?"

What can I do but wait till the day when I can give Gilbert his father's name?"

"His father's name! Then you can do it, some day? I suspicioned as much. And you've been bound up from doin' it, all this while, — and that 's what 's been layin' so heavy on your mind, was n't it?"

"Betsy," said Mary Potter, with sudden energy, "I 'll say as much as I dare, so that I may keep my senses. I fear, sometimes, I 'll break together for want of a friend like you, to steady me while I walk the last steps of my hard road. Gilbert was born in wedlock; I 'm not bound to deny that; but I committed a sin, — not the sin people charge me with, — and the one that persuaded me to it has to answer for more than I have. I bound myself not to tell the name of Gilbert's father, — not to say where or when I was married, not to do or say anything to put others on the track, until — but there 's the sin and the trouble and the punishment all in one. If I told that, you might guess the rest. You know what a name I 've had to bear, but I 've taken my cross and fought my way, and put up with all things, that I might deserve the fullest justification the Lord has in His hands. If I had known all beforehand, Betsy, — but I expected the release in a month or two, and it has n't come in twenty-five years!"

"Twenty-five years!" repeated Miss Lavender, heedless of the drops running down her thin face. "If there was a sin, Mary, even as big as a yearlin' calf, you 've worked off the cost of it, years ago! If you break your word now, you 'll stand justified in the sight o' the Lord, and of all men, and even if you think a scrimption of it 's left, remember your dooty to Gilbert, and take a less justification for his sake!"

"I 've been tempted that way, Betsy, but the end I wanted has been set in my mind so long I can't get it out. I 've seen the Lord's hand so manifest in these past days, that I 'm fearsome to hurry His judgments. And then,

though I try not to, I 'm waiting from day to day, — almost from hour to hour, — and it seems that if I was to give up and break my vow, He would break it for me the next minute afterwards, to punish my impatience ! ”

“ Why,” Miss Lavender exclaimed, “ it must be your husband's death you 're waitin' for ! ”

Mary Potter started up with a wild look of alarm. “ No — no — not his death ! ” she cried. “ I should want him to — be living ! Ask me no more questions ; forget what I 've said, if it don't incline you to encourage me ! 'That 's why I 've told you so much ! ”

Miss Lavender instantly desisted from further appeal. She rose, put her arm around Mary Potter's waist, and said, — “ I did n't mean to frighten or to worry you, deary. I may think your conscience has worked on itself, like, till it 's ground a bit too sharp ; but I see just how you 're fixed, and won't say another word, without it 's to give comfort. An open confession 's good for the soul, they say, and half a loaf 's better than no bread, and you have n't violated your word a bit, and so let it do you good ! ”

In fact, when Mary Potter grew calm, she was conscious of a relief the more welcome because it was so rare in her experience. Miss Lavender, moreover, hastened to place Gilbert's position in a more cheerful light, and the same story, repeated for a different purpose, now assumed quite another aspect. She succeeded so well, that she left behind her only gratitude for the visit.

Late in the afternoon she came forth from the farmhouse, and commenced slowly ascending the hill. She stopped frequently and looked about her ; her narrow forehead was wrinkled, and the base of her long nose was set between two deep furrows. Her lips were twisted in a pucker of great perplexity, and her eyes were nearly closed in a desperate endeavor to solve some haunting, puzzling question.

“ It 's queer,” she muttered to herself when she had

nearly reached the top of the hill, — “it’s mortal queer! Like a whip-poor-will on a moonlight night: you hear it whistlin’ on the next fence-rail, it does n’t seem a yard off, you step up to ketch it, and there’s nothin’ there; then you step back ag’in, and ‘whip-poor-will! whip-poor-will!’ whistles louder ’n ever, — and so on, the whole night, and some folks says they can throw their voices outside o’ their bodies, but that’s neither here nor there.

“Now why can’t I ketch hold o’ this thing? It is n’t a yard off me, I’ll be snaked! And I dunno what ever she said that makes me think so, but I feel it in my bones, and no use o’ callin’ up words; it’s one o’ them things that comes without callin’, when they come at all, and I’m so near guessin’ I’ll have no peace day or night.”

With many similar observations she resumed her walk, and presently reached the border of the ploughed land. Gilbert’s back was towards her; he was on the descending furrow. She looked at him, started, suddenly lost her breath, and stood with open mouth and wide, fixed eyes.

“HA-HA-A! HA-HA-A-A!”

Loud and shrill her cry rang across the valley. It was like the yell of a war-horse, scenting the battle afar off. All the force of her lungs and muscles expended itself in the sound.

The next instant she dropped upon the moist, ploughed earth, and sat there, regardless of gown and petticoat. “Good Lord!” she repeated to herself, over and over again. Then, seeing Gilbert approaching, startled by the cry, she slowly arose to her feet.

“A good guess,” she said to herself, “and what’s more, there’s ways o’ provin’ it. He’s comin’, and he must n’t know; you’re a fool, Betsy Lavender, not to keep your wits better about you, and go rousin’ up the whole neighborhood; good look that your face is crooked and don’t show much o’ what’s goin’ on inside!”

"What 's the matter, Betsy?" asked Gilbert.

"Nothin' — one o' my crazy notions," she said. "I used to holler like a kildeer when I was a girl and got out on the Brandywine hills alone, and I s'pose I must ha thought about it, and the yell sort o' come of itself, for it just jerked me off o' my feet; but you need n't tell any body that I cut such capers in my old days, not that folks'd much wonder, but the contràry, for they 're used to me."

Gilbert laughed heartily, but he hardly seemed satisfied with the explanation. "You 're all of a tremble," he said.

"Am I? Well, it 's likely, — and my gownd all over mud; but there 's one favor I want to ask o' you, and no common one, neither, namely, the loan of a horse for a week or so."

"A horse?" Gilbert repeated.

"A horse. Not Roger, by no means; I could n't ask that, and he don't know me, anyhow; but the least rough-pacin' o' them two, for I 've got considerable ridin' over the country to do, and I would n't ask you, but it 's a busy time o' year, and all folks is n't so friendly."

"You shall have whatever you want, Betsy," he said. "But you 've heard nothing?" —

"Nothin' o' one sort or t'other. Make yourself easy, lad."

Gilbert, however, had been haunted by new surmises in regard to Dr. Deane. Certain trifles had returned to his memory since the interview, and rather than be longer annoyed with them, he now opened his heart to Miss Lavender.

A curious expression came over her face. "You 've got sharp eyes and ears Gilbert," she said. "Now supposin I wanted your horse o' purpose to clear up your doubts in a way to satisfy you, would you mind lettin' me have it?"

"Take even Roger!" he exclaimed.

"No, that bay 'll do. Keep thinkin' *that 's what I 'm* after, and ask me no more questions"

She crossed the ploughed land, crept through the fence, and trudged up the road. When a clump of bushes on the bank had hid Gilbert from her sight, she stopped, took breath, and chuckled with luxurious satisfaction.

"Betsy Lavender," she said, with marked approval, "you 're a cuter old thing than I took you to be!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

MYSTERIOUS MOVEMENTS.

THE next morning Sam took Gilbert's bay horse to **Ken-**nett Square, and hitched him in front of Dr. Deane's door. Miss Lavender, who was on the look-out, summoned the boy into the house, to bring her own side-saddle down from the garret, and then proceeded to pack a small valise, with straps corresponding to certain buckles behind the saddle. Martha Deane looked on with some surprise at this proceeding, but as Miss Lavender continued silent, she asked no questions.

"There!" exclaimed the spinster, when everything was ready, "now I'm good for a week's travel, if need be! You want to know where I'm goin', child, I see, and you might as well out with the words, though not much use, for I hardly know myself."

"Betsy," said Martha, "you seem so strange, so unlike yourself, ever since you came home last evening. What is it?"

"I remembered somethin', on the way up; my head's been so bothered that I forgot things, never mind what, for I must have some business o' my own or I would n't seem to belong to myself; and so I've got to trapes round considerable, — money matters and the likes, — and folks a'n't always ready for you to the minute; therefore count on more time than what's needful, say I."

"And you can't guess when you will be back?" **Martha** asked.

"Hardly under a week. I want to finish up everything and come home for a good long spell."

With these words she descended to the road, valise in hand, buckled it to the saddle, and mounted the horse. Then she said good-bye to Martha, and rode briskly away, down the Philadelphia road.

Several days passed and nothing was heard of her. Gilbert Potter remained on his farm, busy with the labor of the opening spring; Mark Deane was absent, taking measurements and making estimates for the new house, and Sally Fairthorn spent all her spare time in spinning flax for a store of sheets and table-cloths, to be marked "S. A. F." in red silk, when duly woven, hemmed, and bleached.

One afternoon, during Miss Lavender's absence, Dr. Deane was again called upon to attend Old-man Barton. It was not an agreeable duty, for the Doctor suspected that something more than medical advice was in question. He had not visited the farm-house since his discovery of Martha's attachment to Gilbert Potter,—had even avoided intercourse with Alfred Barton, towards whom his manner became cold and constrained. It was a sore subject in his thoughts, and both the Bartons seemed to be, in some manner, accessory to his disappointment.

The old man complained of an attack of "buzzing in the head," which molested him at times, and for which bleeding was the Doctor's usual remedy. His face had a flushed, congested, purple hue, and there was an unnatural glare in his eyes; but the blood flowed thickly and sluggishly from his skinny arm, and a much longer time than usual elapsed before he felt relieved.

"Gad, Doctor!" he said, when the vein had been closed, "the spring weather brings me as much fulness as a young buck o' twenty. I'd be frisky yet, if 't was n't for them legs. Set down, there; you've news to tell me!"

"I think, Friend Barton," Dr. Deane answered, "thee'd better be quiet a spell. Talking is n't exactly good for thee."

"Eh?" the old man growled; "maybe you'd like to

think so, Doctor. If I am house-bound, I pick up some things as they go around. And I know why you let our little matter drop so sudden."

He broke off with a short, malicious laugh, which excited the Doctor's ire. The latter seated himself, smoothed his garments and his face, became odorous of bergamot and wintergreen, and secretly determined to repay the old man for this thrust.

"I don't know what thee may have heard, Friend Barton," he remarked, in his blindest voice. "There is always plenty of gossip in this neighborhood, and some persons, no doubt, have been too free with my name, — mine and my daughter's, I may say. But I want thee to know that that has nothing to do with the relinquishment of my visits to thee. If thee's curious to learn the reason, perhaps thy son Alfred may be able to give it more circumstantially than I can."

"What, what, what!" exclaimed the old man. "The boy told you not to come, eh?"

"Not in so many words, mind thee; but he made it unnecessary, — quite unnecessary. In the first place, he gave me no legal evidence of any property, and until that was done, my hands were tied. Further, he seemed very loath to address Martha at all, which was not so singular, considering that he never took any steps, from the first, to gain her favor; and then he deceived me into imagining that she wanted time, after she had positively refused his addresses. He is mistaken, and thee too, if you think that I am very anxious to have a man of no spirit and little property for my son-in-law!"

The Doctor's words expressed more than he intended. They not only stung, but betrayed his own sting. Old-man Barton crooked his claws around his hickory staff, and shook with senile anger; while his small, keen eyes glared on his antagonist's face. Yet he had force enough to wait until the first heat of his feeling subsided.

"Doctor," he then said, "mayhap my boy's better than a man o' no name and no property. He's worth, anyways, what I choose to make him worth. Have you made up y'r mind to take the t'other, that you've begun to run him down, eh?"

They were equally matched, this time. The color came into Dr. Deane's face, and then faded, leaving him slightly livid about the mouth. He preserved his external calmness, by a strong effort, but there was a barely perceptible tremor in his voice, as he replied, —

"It is not pleasant to a man of my years to be made a tool of, as I have every reason to believe thy son has attempted. If I had yielded to his persuasions, I should have spent much time — all to no purpose, I doubt not — in endeavoring to ascertain what thee means to do for him in thy will. It was, indeed, the only thing he seemed to think or care much about. If he has so much money of his own, as thee says, it is certainly not creditable that he should be so anxious for thy decease."

The Doctor had been watching the old man as he spoke, and the increasing effect of his words was so perceptible that he succeeded in closing with an agreeable smile and a most luxurious pinch of snuff. He had not intended to say so much, at the commencement of the conversation, but he had been sorely provoked, and the temptation was irresistible.

The effect was greater than he had imagined. Old Barton's face was so convulsed, that, for a few minutes, the Doctor feared an attack of complete paralysis. He became the physician again, undid his work as much as possible, and called Miss Ann into the room, to prevent any renewal of the discussion. He produced his stores of entertaining gossip, and prolonged his stay until all threatening symptoms of the excitement seemed to be allayed. The old man returned to his ordinary mood, and listened, and made his gruff comments, but with temporary fits of abstraction.

After the Doctor's departure, he scarcely spoke at all, for the remainder of the evening.

A day or two afterwards, when Alfred Barton returned in the evening from a sale in the neighborhood, he was aware of a peculiar change in his father's manner. His first impression was that the old man, contrary to Dr. Deane's orders, had resumed his rations of brandy, and exceeded the usual allowance. There was a vivid color on his flabby cheeks; he was alert, talkative, and frequently chuckled to himself, shifting the hickory staff from hand to hand, or rubbing his gums backward and forward on its rounded end.

He suddenly asked, as Alfred was smoking his pipe before the fire, —

"Know what I 've been thinkin' of, to-day, boy?"

"No, daddy; anything about the crops?"

"Ha! ha! a pretty good crop for somebody it'll be! Nearly time for me to make my will, eh? ~~Oh~~ I'm so old and weak — no life left in me — can't last many days!"

He laughed with a hideous irony, as he pronounced these words. His son stared at him, and the fire died out in the pipe between his teeth. Was the old man getting childish? he asked himself. But no; he had never looked more diabolically cunning and watchful.

"Why, daddy," Alfred said at last, "I thought — I fancied, at least, you 'd done that, long ago."

"Maybe I have, boy; but maybe I want to change it. I had a talk with the Doctor when he came down to bleed me, and since there 's to be no match between you and the girl" —

He paused, keeping his eyes on his son's face which lengthened and grew vacant with a vague alarm.

"Why, then," he presently resumed, "*you're* so much poorer by the amount o' her money. Would it be fair, do you think, if I was to put that much to what I might have meant for you before? Don't you allow you ought to have a little more, on account o' your disapp'intment?"

"If you think so, dad, it's all right," said the son, relighting his pipe. "I don't know, though what Elisha'd say to it; but then, he's no right to complain, for he married full as much as I'd ha' got."

"That he did, boy; and when all's said and done, the money's my own to do with it what I please. There's no law o' the oldest takin' all. Yes, yes, I'll have to make a new will!"

A serene joy diffused itself through Alfred Barton's breast. He became frank, affectionate, and confidential.

"To tell you the truth, dad," he said, "I was mighty afraid you'd play the deuce with me, because all's over between me and Martha Deane. You seemed so set on it."

"So I was — so I was," croaked the old man, "but I've got over it since I saw the Doctor. After all I've heerd, she's not the wife for you; it's better as it is. You'd rayther have the money without her, tell the truth now, you dog, ha! ha!"

"Damme, dad, you've guessed it!" Alfred cried, joining in the laugh. "She's too high-flown for me. I never fancied a woman that's ready to take you down, every other word you say; and I'll tell you now, that I had n't much stomach for the match, at any time; but you wanted it, you know, and I've done what I could, to please you."

"You're a good boy, Alfred, — a mighty good boy."

There was nothing very amusing in this opinion, but the old man laughed over it, by fits and starts, for a long time.

"Take a drop o' brandy, boy!" he said. "You may as well have my share, till I'm ready to begin ag'in."

This was the very climax of favor. Alfred arose with a broad beam of triumph on his face, filled the glass, and saying, — "Here's long life to you, dad!" turned it into his mouth.

"Long life?" the old man muttered. "It's pretty long as it is, — eighty-six and over; but it may be ninety-six, or

a hundred and six ; who knows ? Anyhow, boy, long or short, I 'll make a new will ! ”

Giles was now summoned, to wheel him into the adjoining room and put him to bed. Alfred Barton took a second glass of brandy (after the door was closed), lighted a fresh pipe, and seated himself again before the embers to enjoy the surprise and exultation of his fortune. To think that he had worried himself so long for that which finally came of itself ! Half his fear of the old man, he reflected, had been needless ; in many things he had acted like the veriest fool ! Well, it was a consolation to know that all his anxieties were over. The day that should make him a rich and important man might be delayed (his father's strength and vitality were marvellous), but it was certain to come.

Another day or two passed by, and the old man's quick, garrulous, cheerful mood continued, although he made no further reference to the subject of the will. Alfred Barton deliberated whether he should suggest sending for Lawyer Stacy, but finally decided not to hazard his prospects by a show of impatience. He was therefore not a little surprised when his sister Ann suddenly made her appearance in the barn, where he and Giles were mending some dilapidated plough-harness, and announced that the lawyer was even then closeted with their father. Moreover, for the first time in his knowledge, Ann herself had been banished from the house. She clambered into the hay-mow, sat down in a comfortable spot, and deliberately plied her knitting-needles.

Ann seemed to take the matter as coolly as if it were an every-day occurrence, but Alfred could not easily recover from his astonishment. There was more than accident here, he surmised. Mr. Stacy had made his usual visit, not a fortnight before ; his father's determination had evidently been the result of his conversation with Dr. Deane, and in the mean time no messenger had been sent to

Chester, neither was there time for a letter to reach there. Unless Dr. Deane himself were concerned in secretly bringing about the visit, — a most unlikely circumstance, — Alfred Barton could not understand how it happened.

“How did th’ old man seem, when you left the house?” he asked.

“’Pears to me I ha’n’t seen him so chipper these twenty years,” said Ann.

“And how long are they to be left alone?”

“No tellin’,” she answered, rattling her needles. “Mr. Stacy ’ll come, when all ’s done; and not a soul is to go any nearder the house till he gives the word.”

Two hours, three hours, four hours passed away, before the summons came. Alfred Barton found himself so curiously excited that he was fain to leave the harness to Giles, and quiet himself with a pipe or two in the meadow. He would have gone up to the Unicorn for a little stronger refreshment, but did not dare to venture out of sight of the house. Miss Ann was the perfect image of Patience in a hay-mow, smiling at his anxiety. The motion of her needles never ceased, except when she counted the stitches in narrowing.

Towards sunset, Mr. Stacy made his appearance at the barn-door, but his face was a sealed book.

On the morning of that very day, another mysterious incident occurred. Jake Fairthorn had been sent to Carson’s on the old gray mare, on some farm-errand, — perhaps to borrow a pick-axe or a post-spade. He had returned as far as the Philadelphia road, and was entering the thick wood on the level before descending to Redley Creek, when he perceived Betsy Lavender leading Gilbert Potter’s bay horse through a gap in the fence, after which she commenced putting up the rails behind her.

“Why, Miss Betsy! what are you doin’?” cried Jake, spurring up to the spot.

“Boys should speak when they ’re spoken to, and not

come where they 're not wanted," she answered, in a savage tone. "Maybe I 'm goin' to hunt bears."

"Oh, please, let me go along!" eagerly cried Jake, who believed in bears.

"Go along! Yes, and be eat up." Miss Lavender looked very much annoyed. Presently, however, her face became amiable; she took a buckskin purse out of her pocket, selected a small silver coin, and leaning over the fence, held it out to Jake.

"Here!" she said, "here 's a 'levenpenny-bit for you, if you 'll be a good boy, and do exackly as I bid you. Can you keep from gabblin', for two days? Can you hold your tongue and not tell anybody till day after to-morrow that you seen me here, goin' into the woods?"

"Why, that 's easy as nothin'!" cried Jake, pocketing the coin. Miss Lavender, leading the horse, disappeared among the trees.

But it was not quite so easy as Jake supposed. He had not been at home ten minutes, before the precious piece of silver, transferred back and forth between his pocket and his hand in the restless ecstasy of possession, was perceived by Joe. Then, as Jake stoutly refused to tell where it came from, Joe rushed into the kitchen, exclaiming, —

"Mammy, Jake 's stole a levy!"

This brought out Mother Fairthorn and Sally, and the unfortunate Jake, pressed and threatened on all sides, began to cry lamentably.

"She 'll take it from me ag'in, if I tell," he whimpered.

"She? Who?" cried both at once, their curiosity now fully excited; and the end of it was that Jake told the whole story, and was made wretched.

"Well!" Sally exclaimed, "this beats all! Gilbert Potter's bay horse, too! What ever could she be after? I 'll have no peace till I tell Martha, and so I may as well go up at once, for there 's something in the wind, and if she don't know already, she ought to!"

Thereupon Sally put on her bonnet, leaving her pewters half scoured, and ran rather than walked to the village. Martha Deane could give no explanation of the circumstance, but endeavored, for Miss Lavender's sake, to conceal her extreme surprise.

"We shall know what it means," she said, "when Betzy comes home, and if it's anything that concerns me, I promise, Sally, to tell you. It may, however, relate to some business of her own, and so, I think, we had better quietly wait and say nothing about it."

Nevertheless, after Sally's departure, Martha meditated long and uneasily upon what she had heard. The fact that Miss Lavender had come back from the Potter farmhouse in so unusual a frame of mind, borrowed Gilbert's horse, and set forth on some mysterious errand, had already disquieted her. More than the predicted week of absence had passed, and now Miss Lavender, instead of returning home, appeared to be hiding in the woods, anxious that her presence in the neighborhood should not be made known. Moreover she had been seen by the landlord of the Unicorn, three days before, near Logtown, riding towards Kennett Square.

These mysterious movements filled Martha Deane with a sense of anxious foreboding. She felt sure that they were connected, in some way, with Gilbert's interests, and Miss Lavender's reticence now seemed to indicate a coming misfortune which she was endeavoring to avert. If these fears were correct, Gilbert needed her help also. He could not come to her; was she not called upon to go to him?

Her resolution was soon taken, and she only waited until her father had left on a visit to two or three patients along the Street Road. His questions, she knew, would bring on another painful conflict of will, and she would save her strength for Gilbert's necessities. To avoid the inferences of the tavern loungers, she chose the longer

way, eastward out of the village to the cross-road running past the Carson place.

All the sweet, faint tokens of Spring cheered her eyes and calmed the unrest of her heart, as she rode. Among the dead leaves of the woods, the snowy blossoms of the blood-root had already burst forth in starry clusters; the anemones trembled between the sheltering knees of the old oaks, and here and there a single buttercup dropped its gold on the meadows. These things were so many presentiments of brighter days in Nature, and they awoke a corresponding faith in her own heart.

As she approached the Potter farm she slackened her horse's pace, and deliberated whether she should ride directly to the house or seek for Gilbert in the fields. She had not seen Mary Potter since that eventful Sunday, the previous summer, and felt that Gilbert ought to be consulted before a visit which might possibly give pain. Her doubts were suddenly terminated by his appearance, with Sam and an ox-cart, in the road before her.

Gilbert could with difficulty wait until the slow oxen had removed Sam out of hearing.

"Martha! were you coming to me?" he asked.

"As I promised, Gilbert," she said. "But do not look so anxious. If there really is any trouble, I must learn it of you."

She then related to him what she had noticed in Miss Lavender's manner, and learned of her movements. He stood before her, listening, with his hand on the mane of her horse, and his eyes intently fixed on her face. She saw the agitation her words produced, and her own vague fears returned.

"Can you guess her business, Gilbert?" she asked.

"Martha," he answered, "I only know that there is something in her mind, and I believe it concerns me. I am afraid to guess anything more, because I have only my own wild fancies to go upon, and it won't do to give 'em play!"

"What are those fancies, Gilbert? May I not know?"

"Can you trust me a little, Martha?" he implored. "Whatever I know, you shall know; but if I sometimes seek useless trouble for myself, why should I seek it for you? I'll tell you now one fear I've kept from you, and you'll see what I mean."

He related to her his dread that Sandy Flash might prove to be his father, and the solution of it in the highwayman's cell. "Have I not done right?" he asked.

"I am not sure, Gilbert," she replied, with a brave smile; "you might have tested my truth, once more, if you had spoken your fears."

"I need no test, Martha; and you won't press me for another, now. I'll only say, and you'll be satisfied with it, that Betsy seemed to guess what was in my mind, and promised, or rather expected, to come back with good news."

"Then," said Martha, "I must wait until she makes her appearance."

She had hardly spoken the words, before a figure became visible between the shock-headed willows, where the road crosses the stream. A bay horse — and then Betsy Lavender herself!

Martha turned her horse's head, and Gilbert hastened forward with her, both silent and keenly excited.

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Betsy, "what are you two a-doin' here?"

There was news in her face, both saw; yet they also remarked that the meeting did not seem to be entirely welcome to her.

"I came," said Martha, "to see whether Gilbert could tell me why you were hiding in the woods, instead of coming home."

"It's that — that good-for-nothin' serpent, Jake Fairthorn!" cried Miss Lavender. "I see it all now. Much Gilbert could tell you, howsever, or you him, o' my business, and have n't I a right to it, as well as other folks; but

never mind, fine as it 's spun it 'll come to the sun, as they say o' flax and sinful doin's; not that such is mine, but you may think so if you like, and you 'll know in a day or two anyhow!"

Martha saw that Miss Lavender's lean hands were trembling, and guessed that her news must be of vital importance. "Betsy," she said, "I see you don't mean to tell us; but one word you can't refuse — is it good or bad?"

"Good or bad?" Miss Lavender repeated, growing more and more nervous, as she looked at the two anxious faces. "Well, it is n't bad, so peart yourselves up, and ask me no more questions, this day, nor yet to-morrow, maybe; because if you do, I 'll just screech with all my might; I 'll holler, Gilbert, wuss 'n you heerd, and much good that 'll do you, givin' me a crazy name all over the country. I 'm in dead earnest; if you try to worm anything more out o' me, I 'll screech; and so I was goin' to bring your horse home, Gilbert, and have a talk with your mother, but you 've made me mortal weak betwixt and between you; and I 'll ride back with Martha, by your leave, and you may send Sam right away for the horse. No; let Sam come now, and walk alongside, to save me from Martha's curiosity."

Miss Lavender would not rest until this arrangement was made. The two ladies then rode away through the pale, hazy sunset, leaving Gilbert Potter in a fever of impatience, dread, and hope.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FUNERAL.

THE next morning, at daybreak, Dr. Deane was summoned in haste to the Barton farm-house. Miss Betsy Lavender, whose secrets, whatever they were, had interfered with her sleep, heard Giles's first knock, and thrust her night-cap out the window before he could repeat it. The old man, so Giles announced, had a bad spell, — a 'plectic fit, Lawyer Stacy called it, and they did n't know as he 'd live from one hour to another.

Miss Lavender aroused the Doctor, then dressed herself in haste, and prepared to accompany him. Martha, awakened by the noise, came into the spinster's room in her night-dress.

"Must you go, Betsy?" she asked.

"Child, it's a matter o' life and death, more likely death; and Ann's a dooless critter at best, hardly ever off the place, and need o' Chris'en help, if there ever was such; so don't ask me to stay, for I won't, and all the better for me, for I dares n't open my lips to livin' soul till I 've spoke with Mary Potter!"

Miss Lavender took the foot-path across the fields, accompanied by Giles, who gave up his saddled horse to Dr. Deane. The dawn was brightening in the sky as they reached the farm-house, where they found Alfred Barton restlessly walking backwards and forwards in the kitchen, while Ann and Mr. Stacy were endeavoring to apply such scanty restoratives — consisting principally of lavender and hot bricks — as the place afforded.

An examination of the eyes and the pulse, and a last abortive attempt at phlebotomy, convinced Dr. Deane that his services were no longer needed. Death, which so many years before had lamed half the body, now asserted his claim to the whole. A wonderfully persistent principle of vitality struggled against the clogged functions, for two or three hours, then yielded, and the small fragment of soul in the old man was cast adrift, with little chance of finding a comfortable lodging in any other world.

Ann wandered about the kitchen in a dazed state, dropping tears everywhere, and now and then moaning, — “O Betsy, how ’ll I ever get up the funeral dinner?” while Alfred, after emptying the square bottle of brandy, threw himself upon the settle and went to sleep. Mr. Stacy and Miss Lavender, who seemed to know each other thoroughly at the first sight, took charge of all the necessary arrangements; and as Alfred had said, — “I can’t look after anything; do as you two like, and don’t spare expense!” they ordered the coffin, dispatched messengers to the relatives and neighbors, and soothed Ann’s unquiet soul by selecting the material for the dinner, and engaging the Unicorn’s cook.

When all was done, late in the day, Miss Lavender called Giles and said, — “Saddle me a horse, and if no side-saddle, a man’s ’ll do, for go I must; it’s business o’ my own, Mr. Stacy, and won’t wait for me; not that I want to do more this day than what I’ve done, Goodness knows; but I ’ll have a fit, myself, if I don’t!”

She reached the Potter farm-house at dark, and both mother and son were struck with her flushed, excited, and yet weary air. Their supper was over, but she refused to take anything more than a cup of tea; her speech was forced, and more rambling and disconnected than ever. When Mary Potter left the kitchen to bring some fresh cream from the spring-house, Miss Lavender hastily approached Gilbert, laid her hand on his shoulder, and said, —

“Lad, be good this once’t, and do what I tell you. Make a reason for goin’ to bed as soon as you can ; for I ’ve been workin’ in your interest all this while, only I ’ve got that to tell your mother, first of all, which you must n’t hear ; and you may hope as much as you please, for the news is n’t bad, as ’ll soon be made manifest !”

Gilbert was strangely impressed by her solemn, earnest manner, and promised to obey. He guessed, and yet feared to believe, that the long release of which his mother had spoken had come at last ; how else, he asked himself, should Miss Lavender become possessed of knowledge which seemed so important ? As early as possible he went up to his bedroom, leaving the two women alone. The sound of voices, now high and hurried, now, apparently, low and broken, came to his ears. He resisted the temptation to listen, smothered his head in the pillow to further muffle the sounds, and after a long, restless struggle with his own mind, fell asleep. Deep in the night he was awakened by the noise of a shutting door, and then all was still.

It was very evident, in the morning, that he had not miscalculated the importance of Miss Lavender’s communication. Was this woman, whose face shone with such a mingled light of awe and triumph, his mother ? Were these features, where the deep lines of patience were softened into curves of rejoicing, the dark, smouldering gleam of sorrow kindled into a flashing light of pride, those he had known from childhood ? As he looked at her, in wonder renewed with every one of her movements and glances, she took him by the hand and said, —

“Gilbert, wait a little !”

Miss Lavender insisted on having breakfast by sunrise, and as soon as the meal was over demanded her horse. Then first she announced the fact of Old-man Barton’s death, and that the funeral was to be on the following day.

“Mary, you must be sure and come,” she said, as she

took leave ; " I know Ann expects it of you. Ten o'clock, remember ! "

Gilbert noticed that his mother laid aside her sewing, and when the ordinary household labor had been performed, seated herself near the window with a small old Bible, which he had never before seen in her hands. There was a strange fixedness in her gaze, as if only her eyes, not her thoughts, were directed upon its pages. The new expression of her face remained ; it seemed already to have acquired as permanent a stamp as the old. Against his will he was infected by its power, and moved about in barn and field all day with a sense of the unreality of things, which was very painful to his strong, practical nature.

The day of the old man's funeral came. Sam led up the horses, and waited at the gate with them to receive his master's parting instructions. Gilbert remarked with surprise that his mother placed a folded paper between the leaves of the Bible, tied the book carefully in a linen handkerchief, and carried it with her. She was ready, but still hesitated, looking around the kitchen with the manner of one who had forgotten something. Then she returned to her own room, and after some minutes, came forth, paler than before, but proud, composed, and firm.

" Gilbert," she said, almost in a whisper, " I have tried you sorely, and you have been wonderfully kind and patient. I have no right to ask anything more ; I *could* tell you everything now, but this is not the place nor the time I had thought of, for so many years past. Will you let me finish the work in the way pointed out to me ? "

" Mother," he answered, " I cannot judge in this matter, knowing nothing. I must be led by you ; but, pray, do not let it be long ? "

" It will not be long, my boy, or I would n't ask it. I have one more duty to perform, to myself, to you, and to the Lord, and it must be done in the sight of men. Will

you stand by me, not question my words, not interfere with my actions, however strange they may seem, but simply believe and obey?"

"I will, mother," he said, "because you make me feel that I must."

They mounted, and side by side rode up the glen. Mary Potter was silent; now and then her lips moved, not, as once, in some desperate appeal of the heart for pity and help, but as with a thanksgiving so profound that it must needs be constantly renewed, to be credited.

After passing Carson's, they took the shorter way across the fields, and approached the Barton farm-house from below. A large concourse of people was already assembled; and the rude black hearse, awaiting its burden in the lane, spread the awe and the gloom of death over the scene. The visitors were grouped around the doors, silent or speaking cautiously in subdued tones; and all new-comers passed into the house to take their last look at the face of the dead.

The best room, in which the corpse lay, was scarcely used once in a year, and many of the neighbors had never before had occasion to enter it. The shabby, antiquated furniture looked cold and dreary from disuse, and the smell of camphor in the air hardly kept down the musty, mouldy odors which exhaled from the walls. The head and foot of the coffin rested on two chairs placed in the centre of the room; and several women, one of whom was Miss Betsy Lavender, conducted the visitors back and forth, as they came. The members of the bereaved family were stiffly ranged around the walls, the chief mourners consisting of the old man's eldest son, Elisha, with his wife and three married sons, Alfred, and Ann.

Mary Potter took her son's arm, and they passed through the throng at the door, and entered the house. Gilbert silently returned the nods of greeting; his mother neither met nor avoided the eyes of others. Her step was

firm, her head erect, her bearing full of pride and **decision**. Miss Lavender, who met her with a questioning glance at the door, walked beside her to the room of death, and then — what was remarkable in her — became very pale.

They stood by the coffin. It was not a peaceful, solemn sight, that yellow face, with its wrinkles and creases and dark blotches of congealed blood, made more pronounced and ugly by the white shroud and cravat, yet a tear rolled down Mary Potter's cheek as she gazed upon it. Other visitors came, and Gilbert gently drew her away, to leave the room ; but with a quick pressure upon his arm, as if to remind him of his promise, she quietly took her seat near the mourners, and by a slight motion indicated that he should seat himself at her side.

It was an unexpected and painful position ; but her face, firm and calm, shamed his own embarrassment. He saw, nevertheless, that the grief of the mourners was not so profound as to suppress the surprise, if not indignation, which the act called forth. The women had their handkerchiefs to their eyes, and were weeping in a slow, silent, mechanical way ; the men had handkerchiefs in their hands, but their faces were hard, apathetic, and constrained.

By-and-by the visitors ceased ; the attending women exchanged glances with each other and with the mourners, and one of the former stepped up to Mary Potter and said gently, —

“ It is only the family, now.”

This was according to custom, which required that just before the coffin was closed, the members of the family of the deceased should be left alone with him for a few minutes, and take their farewell of his face, undisturbed by other eyes. Gilbert would have risen, but his mother, with her hand on his arm, quietly replied, —

“ We belong to the family.”

The woman withdrew, though with apparent doubt and hesitation, and they were left alone with the mourners.

Gilbert could scarcely trust his senses. A swift suspicion of his mother's insanity crossed his mind ; but when he looked around the room and beheld Alfred Barton gazing upon her with a face more livid than that of the dead man, this suspicion was followed by another, no less overwhelming. For a few minutes everything seemed to whirl and spin before his eyes ; a light broke upon him, but so unexpected, so incredible, that it came with the force of a blow.

The undertaker entered the room and screwed down the lid of the coffin ; the pall-bearers followed and carried it to the hearse. Then the mourners rose and prepared to set forth, in the order of their relation to the deceased. Elisha Barton led the way, with his wife ; then Ann, clad in her Sunday black, stepped forward to take Alfred's arm.

"Ann," said Mary Potter, in a low voice, which yet was heard by every person in the room, "that is my place."

She left Gilbert and moved to Alfred Barton's side. Then, slightly turning, she said, — "Gilbert, give your arm to your aunt."

For a full minute no other word was said. Alfred Barton stood motionless, with Mary Potter's hand on his arm. A fiery flush succeeded to his pallor ; his jaw fell, and his eyes were fixed upon the floor. Ann took Gilbert's arm in a helpless, bewildered way.

"Alfred, what does all this mean ?" Elisha finally asked.

He said nothing ; Mary Potter answered for him, — "It is right that he should walk with his wife rather than his sister."

The horses and chairs were waiting in the lane, and helping neighbors were at the door ; but the solemn occasion was forgotten, in the shock produced by this announcement. Gilbert started and almost reeled ; Ann clung to him with helpless terror ; and only Elisha, whose face grew dark and threatening, answered.

“Woman,” he said, “you are out of your senses! Leave us; you have no business here!”

She met him with a proud, a serene and steady countenance. “Elisha,” she answered, “we are here to bury your father and my father-in-law. Let be until the grave has closed over him; then ask Alfred whether I could dare to take my rightful place before to-day.”

The solemn decision of her face and voice struck him dumb. His wife whispered a few words in his ear, and he turned away with her, to take his place in the funeral procession.

It was Alfred Barton’s duty to follow, and if it was not grief which impelled him to bury his face in his handkerchief as they issued from the door, it was a torture keener than was ever mingled with grief,—the torture of a mean nature, pilloried in its meanest aspect for the public gaze. Mary, (we must not call her Potter, and cannot yet call her Barton,) rather led him than was led by him, and lifted her face to the eyes of men. The shame which she might have felt, as his wife, was lost in the one overpowering sense of the justification for which she had so long waited and suffered.

When the pair appeared in the yard, and Gilbert followed with Miss Ann Barton on his arm, most of the funeral guests looked on in stupid wonder, unable to conceive the reason of the two thus appearing among the mourners. But when they had mounted and were moving off, a rumor of the startling truth ran from lip to lip. The proper order of the procession was forgotten; some untied their horses in haste and pushed forward to convince themselves of the astonishing fact; others gathered into groups and discussed it earnestly. Some had suspected a relation of the kind, all along, so they said; others scouted at the story, and were ready with explanations of their own. But not a soul had another thought to spare for Old-man Barton that day.

Er. Deane and Martha heard what had happened as

they were mounting their horses. When they took their places in the line, the singular companionship, behind the hearse, was plainly visible. Neither spoke a word, but Martha felt that her heart was beating fast, and that her thoughts were unsteady.

Presently Miss Lavender rode up and took her place at her side. Tears were streaming from her eyes, and she was using her handkerchief freely. It was sometime before she could command her feelings enough to say, in a husky whisper, —

“I never thought to ha’ had a hand in such wonderful doin’s, and how I held up through it, I can’t tell. Glory to the Lord, the end has come; but, no — not yet — not quite; only enough for one day, Martha; is n’t it?”

“Betsy,” said Martha, “please ride a little closer, and explain to me how it came about. Give me one or two points for my mind to rest on, for I don’t seem to believe even what I see.”

“What I see. No wonder, who could? Well, it’s enough that Mary was married to Alf. Barton a matter o’ twenty-six year ago, and that he swore her to keep it secret till th’ old man died, and he’s been her husband all this while, and knowed it!”

“Father!” Martha exclaimed in a low, solemn voice, turning to Dr. Deane, “think, now, what it was thee would have had me do!”

The Doctor was already aware of his terrible mistake. “Thee was led, child,” he answered, “thee was led! It was a merciful Providence.”

“Then might thee not also admit that I have been led in that other respect, which has been so great a trial to thee?”

He made no reply.

The road to Old Kennett never seemed so long; never was a corpse so impatiently followed. A sense of decency restrained those who were not relatives from pushing in

advance of those who were ; yet it was very tantalizing to look upon the backs of Alfred Barton and Mary, Gilbert and Ann, when their faces must be such a sight to see !

These four, however, rode in silence. Each, it may be guessed, was sufficiently occupied with his or her own sensations, — except, perhaps, Ann Barton, who had been thrown so violently out of her quiet, passive round of life by her father's death, that she was incapable of any great surprise. Her thoughts were more occupied with the funeral-dinner, yet to come, than with the relationship of the young man at her side.

Gilbert slowly admitted the fact into his mind, but he was so unprepared for it by anything in his mother's life or his own intercourse with Alfred Barton, that he was lost in a maze of baffled conjectures. While this confusion lasted, he scarcely thought of his restoration to honor, or the breaking down of that fatal barrier between him and Martha Deane. His first sensation was one of humiliation and disappointment. How often had he been disgusted with Alfred Barton's meanness and swagger ! How much superior, in many of the qualities of manhood, was even the highwayman, whose paternity he had so feared ! As he looked at the broad, heavy form before him, in which even the lines of the back expressed cowardice and abject shame, he almost doubted whether his former disgrace was not preferable to his present claim to respect.

Then his eyes turned to his mother's figure, and a sweet, proud joy swept away the previous emotion. Whatever the acknowledged relationship might be to him, to her it was honor — yea, more than honor ; for by so much and so cruelly as she had fallen below the rights of her pure name as a woman, the higher would she now be set, not only in respect, but in the reverence earned by her saintly patience and self-denial. The wonderful transformation of her face showed him what this day was to her life, and he resolved that no disappointment of his own should come between her and her triumph.

To Gilbert the way was not too long, nor the progress too slow. It gave him time to grow familiar, not only with the fact, but with his duty. He forcibly postponed his wandering conjectures, and compelled his mind to dwell upon that which lay immediately before him.

It was nearly noon before the hearse reached Old Kennett meeting-house. The people of the neighborhood, who had collected to await its arrival, came forward and assisted the mourners to alight. Alfred Barton mechanically took his place beside his wife, but again buried his face in his handkerchief. As the wondering, impatient crowd gathered around, Gilbert felt that all was known, and that all eyes were fixed upon himself and his mother, and his face reflected her own firmness and strength. From neither could the spectators guess what might be passing in their hearts. They were both paler than usual, and their resemblance to each other became very striking. Gilbert, in fact, seemed to have nothing of his father except the peculiar turn of his shoulders and the strong build of his chest.

They walked over the grassy, briery, unmarked mounds of old graves to the spot where a pile of yellow earth denoted Old Barton's resting-place. When the coffin had been lowered, his children, in accordance with custom, drew near, one after the other, to bend over and look into the narrow pit. Gilbert led up his trembling aunt, who might have fallen in, had he not carefully supported her. As he was withdrawing, his eyes suddenly encountered those of Martha Deane, who was standing opposite, in the circle of hushed spectators. In spite of himself a light color shot into his face, and his lips trembled. The eager gossips, who had not missed even the wink of an eyelid, saw this fleeting touch of emotion, and whence it came. Thenceforth Martha shared their inspection; but from the sweet gravity of her face, the untroubled calm of her eyes, they learned nothing more.

When the grave had been filled, and the yellow mound ridged and patted with the spade, the family returned to the grassy space in front of the meeting-house, and now their more familiar acquaintances, and many who were not, gathered around to greet them and offer words of condolence. An overpowering feeling of curiosity was visible upon every face ; those who did not venture to use their tongues, used their eyes the more.

Alfred Barton was forced to remove the handkerchief from his face, and its haggard wretchedness (which no one attributed to grief for his father's death), could no longer be hidden. He appeared to have suddenly become an old man, with deeper wrinkles, slacker muscles, and a helpless, tottering air of weakness. The corners of his mouth drooped, hollowing his cheeks, and his eyes seemed unable to bear up the weight of the lids ; they darted rapidly from side to side, or sought the ground, not daring to encounter, for more than an instant, those of others.

There was no very delicate sense of propriety among the people, and very soon an inquisitive old Quaker remarked, —

“ Why, Mary, is this true that I hear? Are you two man and wife? ”

“ We are,” she said.

“ Bless us ! how did it happen? ”

The bystanders became still as death, and all ears were stretched to catch the answer. But she, with proud, impenetrable calmness, replied, —

“ It will be made known.”

And with these words the people were forced, that day to be satisfied.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE WILL.

DURING the homeward journey from the grave, Gilbert and his mother were still the central figures of interest. That the members of the Barton family were annoyed and humiliated, was evident to all eyes ; but it was a pitiful, undignified position, which drew no sympathy towards them, while the proud, composed gravity of the former commanded respect. The young men and women, especially, were unanimously of the opinion that Gilbert had conducted himself like a man. They were disappointed, it was true, that he and Martha Deane had not met, in the sight of all. It was impossible to guess whether she had been already aware of the secret, or how the knowledge of it would affect their romantic relation to each other.

Could the hearts of the lovers have been laid bare, the people would have seen that never had each felt such need of the other, — never had they been possessed with such restless yearning. To the very last, Gilbert's eyes wandered from time to time towards the slender figure in the cavalcade before him, hoping for the chance of a word or look ; but Martha's finer instinct told her that she must yet hold herself aloof. She appreciated the solemnity of the revelation, saw that much was yet unexplained, and could have guessed, even without Miss Lavender's mysterious hints, that the day would bring forth other and more important disclosures.

As the procession drew nearer Kennett Square, the curiosity of the funeral guests, balked and yet constantly stim-

ulated, began to grow disorderly. Sally Fairthorn was in such a flutter that she scarcely knew what she said or did ; Mark's authority alone prevented her from dashing up to Gilbert, regardless of appearances. The old men, especially those in plain coats and broad-brimmed hats, took every opportunity to press near the mourners ; and but for Miss Betsy Lavender, who hovered around the latter like a watchful dragon, both Gilbert and his mother would have been seriously annoyed. Finally the gate at the lane-end closed upon them, and the discomfited public rode on to the village, tormented by keen envy of the few who had been bidden to the funeral-dinner.

When Mary alighted from her horse, the old lawyer approached her.

"My name is Stacy, Mrs. Barton," he said, "and Miss Lavender will have told you who I am. Will you let me have a word with you in private?"

She slightly started at the name he had given her ; it was the first symptom of agitation she had exhibited. He took her aside, and began talking earnestly in a low tone. Elisha Barton looked on with an amazed, troubled air, and presently turned to his brother.

"Alfred," he said, "it is quite time all this was explained."

But Miss Lavender interfered.

"It's your right, Mr. Elisha, no denyin' that, and the right of all the fam'ly ; so we've agreed to have it done afore all together, in the lawful way, Mr. Stacy bein' a lawyer ; but dinner first, if you please, for eatin' 's good both for grief and cur'osity, and it's hard tellin' which is uppermost in this case. Gilbert, come here !"

He was standing alone, beside the paling. He obeyed her call.

"Gilbert, shake hands with your uncle and aunt. Mr. Elisha, this is your nephew Gilbert Barton, Mr. Alfred's son."

They looked at each other for a moment. There was that in Gilbert's face which enforced respect. Contrasted with his father, who stood on one side, darting stealthy glances at the group from the corners of his eyes, his bearing was doubly brave and noble. He offered his hand in silence, and both Elisha Barton and his wife felt themselves compelled to take it. Then the three sons, who knew the name of Gilbert Potter, and were more astonished than shocked at the new relationship, came up and greeted their cousin in a grave but not unfriendly way.

"That's right!" exclaimed Miss Lavender. "And now come in to dinner, all o' ye! I gev orders to have the meats dished as soon as the first horse was seen over the rise o' the hill, and it 'll all be smokin' on the table."

Though the meal was such as no one had ever before seen in the Barton farm-house, it was enjoyed by very few of the company. The sense of something to come after it made them silent and uncomfortable. Mr. Stacy, Miss Lavender, and the sons of Elisha Barton, with their wives, carried on a scattering, forced conversation, and there was a general feeling of relief when the pies, marmalade, and cheese had been consumed, and the knives and forks laid crosswise over the plates.

When they arose from the table, Mr. Stacy led the way into the parlor. A fire, in the mean time, had been made in the chill, open fireplace, but it scarcely relieved the dreary, frosty aspect of the apartment. The presence of the corpse seemed to linger there, attaching itself with ghastly distinctness to the chair and hickory staff in a corner.

The few dinner-guests who were not relatives understood that this meeting excluded them, and Elisha Barton was therefore surprised to notice, after they had taken their seats, that Miss Lavender was one of the company.

"I thought," he said, with a significant look, "that 't was to be the family only."

"Miss Lavender is one of the witnesses to the will," Mr Stacy answered, "and her presence is necessary, moreover, as an important testimony in regard to some of its provisions."

Alfred Barton and Gilbert both started at these words, but from very different feelings. The former, released from public scrutiny, already experienced a comparative degree of comfort, and held up his head with an air of courage; yet now the lawyer's announcement threw him into an agitation which it was not possible to conceal. Miss Lavender looked around the circle, coolly nodded her head to Elisha Barton, and said nothing.

Mr. Stacy arose, unlocked a small niche let into the wall of the house, and produced the heavy oaken casket in which the old man kept the documents relating to his property. This he placed upon a small table beside his chair, opened it, and took out the topmost paper. He was completely master of the situation, and the deliberation with which he surveyed the circle of excited faces around him seemed to indicate that he enjoyed the fact.

"The last will and testament of Abiah Barton, made the day before his death," he said, "revokes all former wills, which were destroyed by his order, in the presence of myself and Miss Elizabeth Lavender."

All eyes were turned upon the spinster, who again nodded, with a face of preternatural solemnity.

"In order that you, his children and grandchildren," Mr. Stacy continued, "may rightly understand the deceased's intention in making this last will, when the time comes for me to read it, I must first inform you that he was acquainted with the fact of his son Alfred's marriage with Mary Potter."

Alfred Barton half sprang from his seat, and then fell back with the same startled, livid face, which Gilbert already knew. The others held their breath in suspense, — except Mary, who sat near the lawyer, firm, cold, and unmoved.

"The marriage of Alfred Barton and Mary Potter must therefore be established, to *your* satisfaction," Mr. Stacy resumed, turning towards Elisha. "Alfred Barton, I ask you to declare whether this woman is your lawfully wedded wife?"

A sound almost like a groan came from his throat, but it formed the syllable, — "Yes."

"Further, I ask you to declare whether Gilbert Barton, who has until this day borne his mother's name of Potter, is your lawfully begotten son?"

"Yes."

"To complete the evidence," said the lawyer, "Mary Barton, give me the paper in your hands."

She untied the handkerchief, opened the Bible, and handed Mr. Stacy the slip of paper which Gilbert had seen her place between the leaves that morning. The lawyer gave it to Elisha Barton, with the request that he would read it aloud.

It was the certificate of a magistrate at Burlington, in the Colony of New Jersey, setting forth that he had united in wedlock Alfred Barton and Mary Potter. The date was in the month of June, 1771.

"This paper," said Elisha, when he had finished reading, "appears to be genuine. The evidence must have been satisfactory to you, Mr. Stacy, and to my father, since it appears to have been the cause of his making a new will; but as this new will probably concerns me and my children, I demand to know why, if the marriage was legal, it has been kept secret so long? The fact of the marriage does not explain what has happened to-day."

Mr. Stacy turned towards Gilbert's mother, and made a sign.

"Shall I explain it in my way, Alfred?" she asked, "or will you, in yours?"

"There's but one story," he answered, "and I guess it falls to your place to tell it."

"It does!" she exclaimed. "You, Elisha and Ann, and you, Gilbert, my child, take notice that every word of what I shall say is the plain God's truth. Twenty-seven years ago, when I was a young woman of twenty, I came to this farm to help Ann with the house-work. You remember it, Ann; it was just after your mother's death. I was poor, I had neither father nor mother, but I was as proud as the proudest, and the people called me good-looking. You were vexed with me, Ann, because the young men came now and then, of a Sunday afternoon; but I put up with your hard words. You did not know that I understood what Alfred's eyes meant when he looked at me; I put up with you because I believed I could be mistress of the house, in your place. You have had your revenge of me since, if you felt the want of it — so let that rest!"

She paused. Ann, with her handkerchief to her eyes, sobbed out, — "Mary, I always liked you better 'n you thought."

"I can believe it," she continued, "for I have been forced to look into my heart and learn how vain and mistaken I then was. But I liked Alfred, in those days; he was a gay young man, and accounted good-looking, and there were merry times just before the war, and he used to dress bravely, and was talked about as likely to marry this girl or that. My head was full of him, and I believed my heart was. I let him see from the first that it must be honest love between us, or not at all; and the more I held back, the more eager was he, till others began to notice, and the matter was brought to his father's ears."

"I remember that!" cried Elisha, suddenly.

"Yet it was kept close," she resumed. "Alfred told me that the old man had threatened to cut him out of his will if he should marry me, and I saw that I must leave the farm; but I gave out that I was tired of the country, and wanted to find service in Philadelphia. I believed that Alfred would follow me in a week or two, and he did. He

brought news I did n't expect, and it turned my head upside down. His father had had a paralytic stroke, and nobody believed he 'd live more than a few weeks. It was in the beginning of June, and the doctors said he could n't get over the hot weather. Alfred said to me, Why wait? — you 'll be taking up with some city fellow, and I want you to be my wife at once. On my side I thought, Let him be made rich and free by his father's death, and wives will be thrown in his way; he 'll lose his liking for me, by little and little, and somebody else will be mistress of the farm. So I agreed, and we went to Burlington together, as being more out of the way and easier to be kept secret; but just before we came to the Squire's, he seemed to grow fearsome all at once, lest it should be found out, and he bought a Bible and swore me by my soul's salvation never to say I was married to him until after his father died. Here 's the Bible, Alfred! Do you remember it? Here, here 's the place where I kissed it when I took the oath!"

She rose from her seat, and held it towards him. No one could doubt the solemn truth of her words. He nodded his head mechanically, unable to speak. Still standing, she turned towards Elisha Barton, and exclaimed, —

"*He* took the same oath, but what did it mean to him! What does it mean to a man? I was young and vain; I thought only of holding fast to my good luck! I never thought of — of" — (here her face flushed, and her voice began to tremble) — "of *you*, Gilbert! I fed my pride by hoping for a man's death, and never dreamed I was bringing a curse on a life that was yet to come! Perhaps he did n't then, either; the Lord pardon me if I judge him too hard. What I charge him with, is that he held me to my oath, when — when the fall went by and the winter, and his father lived, and his son was to be born! It was always the same, — Wait a little, a month or so, maybe; the old man could n't live, and it was the difference between riches and poverty for us. Then I begged

for poverty and my good name, and after that he kept away from me. Before Gilbert was born, I hoped I might die in giving him life ; then I felt that I must live for his sake. I saw my sin, and what punishment the Lord had measured out to me, and that I must earn His forgiveness ; and He mercifully hid from my sight the long path that leads to this day ; for if the release had n't seemed so near, I never could have borne to wait ! ”

All the past agony of her life seemed to discharge itself in these words. They saw what the woman had suffered, what wonderful virtues of patience and faith had been developed from the vice of her pride, and there was no heart in the company so stubborn as to refuse her honor. Gilbert's eyes were fixed on her face with an absorbing expression of reverence ; he neither knew nor heeded that there were tears on his cheeks. The women wept in genuine emotion, and even the old lawyer was obliged to wipe his dimmed spectacles.

Elisha rose, and approaching Alfred, asked, in a voice which he strove to make steady, — “ Is all this true ? ”

Alfred sank his head ; his reply was barely audible, —
“ She has said no more than the truth.”

“ Then,” said Elisha, taking her hand, “ I accept you, Mary Barton, and acknowledge your place in our family.”

Elisha's wife followed, and embraced her with many tears, and lastly Ann, who hung tottering upon her shoulder as she cried, —

“ Indeed, Mary, indeed I always liked you ; I never wished you any harm ! ”

Thus encouraged, Alfred Barton made a powerful effort. There seemed but one course for him to take ; it was a hard one, but he took it.

“ Mary,” he said, “ you have full right and justice on your side. I've acted meanly towards you — meaner, I'm afraid, than any man before ever acted towards his wife. Not only to you, but to Gilbert ; but I always meant to

do my duty in the end. I waited from month to month, and year to year, as you did ; and then things got set in their way, and it was harder and harder to let out the truth. I comforted myself — that was n't right, either, I know, — but I comforted myself with the thought that you were doing well ; I never lost sight of you, and I've been proud of Gilbert, though I did n't dare show it, and always wanted to lend him a helping hand, if he 'd let me."

She drew herself up and faced him with flashing eyes.

"How did you mean to do your duty by me? How did you mean to lend Gilbert a helping hand? Was it by trying to take a second wife during my lifetime, and that wife the girl whom Gilbert loves?"

Her questions cut to the quick, and the shallow protestations he would have set up were stripped off in a moment, leaving bare every cowardly shift of his life. Nothing was left but the amplest confession.

"You won't believe me, Mary," he stammered, feebly weeping with pity of his own miserable plight, "and I can't ask to — but it's the truth! Give me your Bible! I'll kiss the place you kissed, and swear before God that I never meant to marry Martha Deane! I let the old man think so, because he hinted it'd make a difference in his will, and he drove me — he and Dr. Deane together — to speak to her. I was a coward and a fool that I let myself be driven that far, but I could n't and would n't have married her!"

"The whole snarl's comin' undone," interrupted Miss Lavender. "I see the end on 't. Do you mind that day, Alf. Barton, when I come upon you sudden, settin' on the log and sayin' 'I can't see the way,' — the very day, I'll be snaked, that you spoke to the Doctor about Martha Deane! — and then *you* so mortal glad that she would n't have you! You *have* acted meaner 'n dirt; I don't excuse him, Mary; but never mind justice is justice, and he's told the truth this once't."

“Sit down, friends!” said Mr. Stacy. “Before the will is read, I want Miss Lavender to relate how it was that Abiah Barton and myself became acquainted with the fact of the marriage.”

The reading of the will had been almost forgotten in the powerful interest excited by Mary Barton’s narrative. The curiosity to know its contents instantly revived, but was still subordinate to that which the lawyer’s statement occasioned. The whole story was so singular, that it seemed as yet but half explained.

“Well, to begin at the beginnin’,” said Miss Lavender, “it all come o’ my wishin’ to help two true-lovvers, and maybe you ’ll think I ’m as foolish as I ’m old, but never mind, I ’ll allow that; and I saw that nothin’ could be done till Gilbert got his lawful name, and how to get it was the trouble, bein’ as Mary was sworn to keep secret. The long and the short of it is, I tried to worm it out o’ her, but no use; she set her teeth as tight as sin, and all I did learn was, that when she was in Phildelphy — I knowed Gilbert was born there, but did n’t let on — she lived at Treadwell’s, in Fourth Street. Then turnin’ over everything in my mind, I suspicioned that she must be waitin’ for somebody to die, and that ’s what held her bound; it seemed to me I *must* guess right away, but I could n’t and could n’t, and so goin’ up the hill, nigh puzzled to death, Gilbert ploughin’ away from me, bendin’ his head for’ard a little — there! turn round, Gilbert! turn round, Alf. Barton! Look at them two sets o’ shoulders!”

Miss Lavender’s words were scarcely comprehensible, but all saw the resemblance between father and son, in the outline of the shoulders, and managed to guess her meaning.

“Well,” she continued, “it struck me then and there, like a streak o’ lightnin’; I screeched and tumbled like a shot hawk, and so betwixt the saddle and the ground,

as the sayin' is, it come to me — not mercy, but knowledge, all the same, you know what I mean ; and I saw them was Alf. Barton's shoulders, and I remembered the old man was struck with palsy the year afore Gilbert was born, and I dunno how many other things come to me all of a heap ; and now you know, Gilbert, what made me holler. I borrowed the loan o' his bay horse and put off for Phil-delphy the very next day, and a mortal job it was ; what with bar'ls and boxes pitched hither and yon, and people laughin' at y'r odd looks, — don't talk o' Phildelphy manners to me, for I've had enough of 'em !—and old Treadwell dead when I did find him, and the daughter married to Greenfield in the brass and tin-ware business, it's a mercy I ever found out anything."

"Come to the point, Betsy," said Elisha, impatiently.

"The point, Betsy. The p'int's this : I made out from the Greenfield woman that the man who used to come to see Mary Potter was the perfect pictur' o' young Alf. Barton ; then to where she went next, away down to the t'other end o' Third Street, boardin', he payin' the board till just afore Gilbert was born — and that's enough, thinks I, let me get out o' this rackety place. So home I posted, but not all the way, for no use to tell Mary Potter, and why not go right to Old-man Barton, and let him know who his daughter-in-law and son is, and see what'll come of it ? Th' old man, you must know, always could abide me better 'n most women, and I was n't a bit afeard of him, not lookin' for legacies, and would n't have 'em at any such price ; but never mind. I hid my horse in the woods and sneaked into the house across the fields, the back way, and good luck that nobody was at home but Ann, here ; and so I up and told the old man the whole story."

"The devil !" Alfred Barton could not help exclaiming, as he recalled his father's singular manner on the evening of the day in question.

"Devil!" Miss Lavender repeated. "More like an angel put it into my head. But I see Mr. Elisha's fidgetty, so I'll make short work o' the rest. He curst and swore awful, callin' Mr. Alfred a mean pup, and I dunno what all, but he had n't so much to say ag'in Mary Potter; he allowed she was a smart lass, and he'd heerd o' Gilbert's doin's, and the lad had grit in him. 'Then,' says I, 'here's a mighty wrong been done, and it's for you to set it right afore you die, and if you manage as I tell you, you can be even with Mr. Alfred;' and he perks up his head and asks how, and says I 'This way'—but what I said'll be made manifest by Mr. Stacy, without my jumpin' ahead o' the proper time. The end of it was, he wound up by sayin',—'Gad, if Stacy was only here!' 'I'll bring him!' says I, and it was fixed betwixt and between us two, Ann knowin' nothin' o' the matter; and off I traped back to Chester, and brung Mr. Stacy, and if that good-for-nothin' Jake Fairthorn had n't ha' seen me"—

"That will do, Miss Lavender," said Mr. Stacy, interrupting her. "I have only to add that Abiah Barton was so well convinced of the truth of the marriage, that his new will only requires the proof which has to-day been furnished, in order to express his intentions fully and completely. It was his wish that I should visit Mary Barton on the very morning afterwards; but his sudden death prevented it, and Miss Lavender ascertained, the same evening, that Mary, in view of the neglect and disgrace which she had suffered, demanded to take her justification into her own hands. My opinion coincided with that of Miss Lavender, that she alone had the right to decide in the matter, and that we must give no explanation until she had asserted, in her own way, her release from a most shameful and cruel bond."

It was a proud moment of Miss Lavender's life, when, in addition to her services, the full extent of which would presently be known, a lawyer of Mr. Stacy's reputation so respectfully acknowledged the wisdom of her judgment.

"If further information upon any point is required," observed the lawyer, "it may be asked for now; otherwise, I will proceed to the reading of the will."

"Was — was my father of sound mind, — that is, competent to dispose of his property?" asked Elisha Barton, with a little hesitation.

"I hope the question will not be raised," said Mr. Stacy, gravely; "but if it is I must testify that he was in as full possession of his faculties as at any time since his first attack, twenty-six years ago."

He then read the will, amid the breathless silence of the company. The old man first devised to his elder son, Elisha Barton, the sum of twenty thousand dollars, investments secured by mortgages on real estate; an equal amount to his daughter-in-law, Mary, provided she was able to furnish legal proof of her marriage to his son, Alfred Barton; five thousand dollars each to his four grand-children, the three sons of Elisha, and Gilbert Barton; ten thousand dollars to his daughter Ann; and to his son Alfred the occupancy and use of the farm during his life, the property, at his death, to pass into the hands of Gilbert Barton. There was also a small bequest to Giles, and the reversions of the estate were to be divided equally among all the heirs. The witnesses to the will were James Stacy and Elizabeth Lavender.

Gilbert and his mother now recognized, for the first time, what they owed to the latter. A sense of propriety kept them silent; the fortune which had thus unexpectedly fallen into their hands was the least and poorest part of their justification. Miss Lavender, also, was held to silence, but it went hard with her. The reading of the will gave her such an exquisite sense of enjoyment that she felt quite choked in the hush which followed it.

"As the marriage is now proven," Mr. Stacy said, folding up the paper, "there is nothing to prevent the will from being carried into effect."

"No, I suppose not," said Elisha; "it is as fair as could be expected."

"Mother, what do you say?" asked Gilbert, suddenly.

"Your grandfather wanted to do me justice, my boy," said she. "Twenty thousand dollars will not pay me for twenty-five years of shame; no money could; but it was the only payment he had to offer. I accept this as I accepted my trials. The Lord sees fit to make my worldly path smooth to my feet, and I have learned neither to reject mercy nor wrath."

She was not elated; she would not, on that solemn day, even express gratification in the legacy, for her son's sake. Though her exalted mood was but dimly understood by the others, they felt its influence. If any thought of disputing the will, on the ground of his father's incompetency, had ever entered Elisha Barton's mind, he did not dare, then or afterwards, to express it.

The day was drawing to a close, and Elisha Barton, with his sons, who lived in the adjoining township of Pennsbury, made preparations to leave. They promised soon to visit Gilbert and his mother. Miss Lavender, taking Gilbert aside, announced that she was going to return to Dr. Deane's.

"I s'pose I may tell her," she said, trying to hide her feelings under a veil of clumsy irony, "that it's all up betwixt and between you, now you're a rich man; and of course as she would n't have the father, she can't think o takin' the son."

"Betsy," he whispered, "tell her that I never yet needed her love so much as now, and that I shall come to her to-morrow."

"Well, you know the door stands open, even accordin' to the Doctor's words."

As Gilbert went forth to look after the horses, Alfred Barton followed him. The two had not spoken directly to each other during the whole day.

"Gilbert," said the father, putting his hand on the son's shoulder, "you know, now, why it always cut me, to have you think ill of me. I deserve it, for I've been no father to you; and after what you've heard to-day, I may never have a chance to be one. But if you *could* give me a chance — if you could" —

Here his voice seemed to fail. Gilbert quietly withdrew his shoulder from the hand, hesitated a moment, and then said, — "Don't ask me anything now, if you please. I can only think of my mother to-day."

Alfred Barton walked to the garden-fence, leaned his arms upon it, and his head upon them. He was still leaning there, when mother and son rode by in the twilight, on their way home.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LOVERS.

BOTH mother and son made the homeward ride in silence. A wide space, a deep gulf of time, separated them from the morning. The events of the day had been so startling, so pregnant with compressed fate, the emotions they had undergone had been so profound, so mixed of the keenest elements of wonder, pain, and pride, that a feeling of exhaustion succeeded. The old basis of their lives seemed to have shifted, and the new foundations were not yet firm under their feet.

Yet, as they sat together before the hearth-fire that evening, and the stern, proud calm of Gilbert's face slowly melted into a gentler and tenderer expression, his mother was moved to speak.

"This has been *my* day," she said; "it was appointed and set apart for me from the first; it belonged to me, and I have used it, in my right, from sun to sun. But I feel now, that it was not my own strength alone that held me up. I am weak and weary, and it almost seems that I fail in thanksgiving. Is it, Gilbert, because you do not rejoice as I had hoped you would?"

"Mother," he answered, "whatever may happen in my life, I can never feel so proud of myself, as I felt to-day, to be your son. I do rejoice for your sake, as I shall for my own, no doubt, when I get better used to the truth. You could not expect me, at once, to be satisfied with a father who has not only acted so cruelly towards you, but whom I have suspected of being my own rival and enemy. I don't

think I shall ever like the new name as well as the old, but it is enough for me that the name brings honor and independence to you !”

“ Perhaps I ought to ha’ told you this morning, Gilbert. I thought only of the justification, not of the trial ; and it seemed easier to speak in actions, to you and to all men at once, as I did, than to tell the story quietly to you alone. I feared it might take away my strength, if I did n’t follow, step by step, the course marked out for me.”

“ You were right, mother !” he exclaimed. “ What trial had I, compared with yours ? What tale had I to tell — what pain to feel, except that if I had not been born, you would have been saved twenty-five years of suffering !”

“ No, Gilbert ! — never say, never think that ! I see already the suffering and the sorrow dying away as if they ’d never been, and you left to me for the rest of life the Lord grants ; to me a son has been more than a husband !”

“ Then,” he asked in an anxious, hesitating tone, “ would you consider that I was not quite so much a son — that any part of my duty to you was lost — if I wished to bring you a daughter, also ?”

“ I know what you mean, Gilbert. Betsy Lavender has told me all. I am glad you spoke of it, this day ; it will put the right feeling of thanksgiving into my heart and yours. Martha Deane never stood between us, my boy ; it was I that stood between you and her !”

“ Mother !” he cried, a joyous light shining from his face, “ you love her ? You are willing that she should be my wife ?”

“ Ay, Gilbert ; willing, and thankful, and proud.”

“ But the very name of her struck you down ! You fell into a deadly faint when I told you I had spoken my mind to her !”

“ I see, my boy,” she said ; “ I see now why you never mentioned her name, from that time. It was not Martha

Deane, but the name of the one you thought wanted to win her away from you, — your father's name, Gilbert, — that seemed to put a stop to my life. The last trial was the hardest of all, but don't you see it was only the bit of darkness that comes before the daylight?"

While this new happiness brought the coveted sense of thanksgiving to mother and son, and spread an unexpected warmth and peace over the close of the fateful day, there was the liveliest excitement in Kennett Square, over Miss Lavender's intelligence. That lady had been waylaid by a dozen impatient questioners before she could reach the shelter of Dr. Deane's roof; and could only purchase release by a hurried statement of the main facts, in which Alfred Barton's cruelty, and his wife's wonderful fidelity to her oath, and the justice done to her and Gilbert by the old man's will, were set forth with an energy that multiplied itself as the gossip spread.

In the adjoining townships, it was reported and believed, the very next day, that Alfred Barton had tried to murder his wife and poison his father — that Mary had saved the latter, and inherited, as her reward, the entire property.

Once safely housed, Miss Lavender enjoyed another triumph. She related the whole story, in every particular, to Martha Deane, in the Doctor's presence, taking especial care not to omit Alfred's words in relation to his enforced wooing.

"And there's one thing I must n't forgit, Martha," she declared, at the close of her narrative. "Gilbert sends word to you that he needs your true-love more 'n ever, and he's comin' up to see you to-morrow; and says I to him, The door's open, even accordin' to the Doctor's words; and so it is, for he's got his true name, and free to come. You're a man o' your word, Doctor, and nothin's been said or done, thank Goodness, that can't be easy mended!"

What impression this announcement made upon Dr Deane could not be guessed by either of the women. He

rose, went to the window, looked into the night for a long time without saying a word, and finally betook himself to his bed.

The next morning, although there were no dangerous cases on his hands, he rode away, remarking that he should not be home again until the evening. Martha knew what this meant, and also what Miss Lavender meant in hurrying down to Fairthorn's, soon after the Doctor's departure. She became restless with tender expectation; her cheeks burned, and her fingers trembled so that she was forced to lay aside her needle-work. It seemed very long since she had even seen Gilbert; it was a long time (in the calendar of lovers) since the two had spoken to each other. She tried to compare the man he had been with the man he now was, — Gilbert poor, disgraced and in trouble, with Gilbert rich and honorably born; and it almost seemed as if the latter had impoverished her heart by taking from it the need of that faithful, passionate sympathy which she had bestowed upon the former.

The long hour of waiting came to an end. Roger was once more tethered at the gate, and Gilbert was in the room. It was not danger, this time, beyond the brink of which they met, but rather a sudden visitation of security; yet both were deeply and powerfully agitated. Martha was the first to recover her composure. Withdrawing herself from Gilbert's arms, she said, —

"It was not right that the tests should be all on my side. Now it is my turn to try you, Gilbert!"

Even her arch, happy smile did not enlighten him. "How, Martha?" he asked.

"Since you don't know, you are already tested. But how grave you look! Have I not yet learned all of this wonderful, wonderful history? Did Betsy Lavender keep something back?"

"Martha!" he cried, "you shame me out of the words I had meant to say. But they were doubts of my own posi-

tion, not of you. Is my new name better or worse in **your ears**, than my old one ? ”

“To me you are only Gilbert,” she answered, “as I am Martha to you. What does it matter whether we write Potter or Barton? Either is good in itself, and so would any other name be ; but Barton means something, as the world goes, and therefore we will take it. Gilbert, I have put myself in your place, since I learned the whole truth. I guessed you would come to me with a strange, uncertain feeling, — not a doubt, but rather a wonder ; and I endeavored to make your new circumstances clear to my mind. Our duty to your mother is plain ; she is a woman beside whom all other women we know seem weak and insignificant. It is not that which troubled you, I am sure, when you thought of me. Let me say, then, that so far as our relation to your father is concerned, I will be guided entirely by your wishes.”

“Martha,” he said, “that *is* my trouble, — or, rather, my disappointment, — that with my true name I must bring to you and fasten upon you the whole mean and shameful story ! One parent must always be honored at the expense of the other, and my name still belongs to the one that is disgraced.”

“I foresaw your feeling, Gilbert. You were on the point of making another test for me ; that is not fair. The truth has come too suddenly, — the waters of your life have been stirred too deeply ; you must wait until they clear. Leave that to Alfred Barton and your mother. To me, I confess, he seems very weak rather than very bad. I can now understand the pains which his addresses to me must have cost him. If I ever saw fear on a man’s face, it was on his when he thought I might take him at his word. But, to a man like you, a mean nature is no better than a bad one. Perhaps I feel your disappointment as deeply as you can ; yet it is our duty to keep this feeling to ourselves. For your mother’s sake, Gilbert ; you must

not let the value of her justification be lessened in her eyes. She deserves all the happiness you and I can give her, and if she is willing to receive me, some day, as a daughter" —

Gilbert interrupted her words by clasping her in his arms. "Martha!" he exclaimed, "your heart points out the true way because it is true to the core! In these things a woman sees clearer than a man; when I am with you only, I seem to have proper courage and independence — I am twice myself! Won't you let me claim you — take you — soon? My mother loves you; she will welcome you as my wife, and will your father still stand between us?"

Martha smiled. "My father is a man of strong will," she said, "and it is hard for him to admit that his judgment was wrong. We must give him a little time, — not urge, not seem to triumph, spare his pride, and trust to his returning sense of what is right. You might claim reparation, Gilbert, for his cruel words; I could not forbid you; but after so much strife let there be peace, if possible."

"It is at least beyond his power," Gilbert replied, "to accuse me of sordid motives. As I said before, Martha, give up your legacy, if need be, but come to me!"

"As I said before, Gilbert, the legacy is honestly mine, and I will come to you with it in my hands."

Then they both began to smile, but it was a conflict of purpose which drew them nearer together, in both senses, — an emulation of unselfish love, which was compromised by clasping arms and silent lips.

There was a sudden noise in the back part of the house. A shrill voice was heard, exclaiming, — "I will — I will! don't hold me!" — the door burst open, and Sally Fairthorn whirled into the room, with the skirt of her gown torn loose, on one side, from the body. Behind her followed Miss Lavender, in a state of mingled amusement and anger.

Sally kissed Martha, then Gilbert, then threw an arm around the neck of each, crying and laughing hysterically "O Martha! O Gilbert! you 'll be married first, — I said it, — but Mark and I must be your bridesmaids; don't laugh, you know what I mean; and Betsy would n't have me break in upon you; but I waited half an hour, and then off, up here, she after me, and we 're both out o' breath! Did ever, ever such a thing happen!"

"You crazy thing!" cried Miss Lavender. "No, such a thing never happened, and would n't ha' happened this time, if I 'd ha' been a little quicker on my legs; but never mind, it serves me right; you two are to blame, for why need I trouble my head further about ye? There 's cases, they say, where two 's company, and three 's overmuch; but you may fix it for yourselves next time, and welcome; and there 's one bit o' wisdom I 've got by it, — foller true-lovyers, and they 'll wear your feet off, and then want you to go on the stumps!"

"We won't relieve you yet, Betsy," said Gilbert; "will we, Martha? The good work you 've done for us is n't finished."

"Is n't finished. Well, you 'll gi' me time to make my will, first. How long d' ye expect me to last, at this rate? Is my bones brass and my flesh locus'-wood? Am I like a tortle, that goes around the fields a hundred years?"

"No," Gilbert answered, "but you shall be like an angel, dressed all in white, with roses in your hair. Sally and Mark, you know, want to be the first bridesmaids" —

Sally interrupted him with a slap, but it was not very violent, and he did not even attempt to dodge it.

"Do you hear, Betsy?" said Martha. "It must be as Gilbert says."

"A pretty fool you 'd make o' me," Miss Lavender remarked, screwing up her face to conceal her happy emotion.

Gilbert soon afterwards left for home, but returned to

wards evening, determined, before all things, to ascertain his present standing with Dr. Deane. He did not anticipate that the task had been made easy for him; but this was really the case. Wherever Dr. Deane had been that day, whoever he had seen, the current of talk all ran one way. When the first surprise of the news had been exhausted, and the Doctor had corrected various monstrous rumors from his own sources of positive knowledge, one inference was sure to follow, — that now there could be no objection to his daughter becoming Gilbert Barton's wife. He was sounded, urged, almost threatened, and finally returned home with the conviction that any further opposition must result in an immense sacrifice of popularity.

Still, he was not ready to act upon that conviction, at once. He met Gilbert with a bland condescension, and when the latter, after the first greeting, asked, —

“Have I now the right to enter your house?”

The Doctor answered, —

“Certainly. Thee has kept thy word, and I will willingly admit that I did thee wrong in suspecting thee of unworthy devices. I may say, also, that so far as I was able to judge, I approved of thy behavior on the day of thy grandfather's funeral. In all that has happened heretofore, I have endeavored to act cautiously and prudently; and thee will grant, I doubt not, that thy family history is so very far out of the common way, as that no man could be called upon to believe it without the strongest evidence. Of course, all that I brought forward against thee now falls to the ground.”

“I trust, then,” Gilbert said, “that you have no further cause to forbid my engagement with Martha. My mother has given her consent, and we both hope for yours.”

Dr. Deane appeared to reflect, leaning back in his chair with his cane across his knees. “It is a very serious thing,” he said, at last, — “very serious, indeed. Not a subject for hasty decision. Thee offered, if I remember

rightly, to give me time to know thee better; therefore thee cannot complain if I were now disposed to accept thy offer."

Gilbert fortunately remembered Martha's words, and restrained his impatience.

"I will readily give you time, Dr. Deane," he replied, "provided you will give me opportunities. You are free to question all who know me, of course, and I suppose you have done so. I will not ask you to take the trouble to come to me, in order that we may become better acquainted, but only that you will allow me to come to you."

"It would hardly be fair to deny thee that much," said the Doctor.

"I will ask no more now. I never meant, from the first to question your interest in Martha's happiness, or your right to advise her. It may be too soon to expect your consent, but at least you 'll hold back your refusal?"

"Thee 's a reasonable young man, Gilbert," the Doctor remarked, after a pause which was quite unnecessary. "I like that in thee. We are both agreed, then, that while I shall be glad to see thee in my house, and am willing to allow to Martha and thee the intercourse proper to a young man and woman, it is not yet to be taken for granted that I sanction your desired marriage. Remember me kindly to thy mother, and say, if thee pleases, that I shall soon call to see her."

Gilbert had scarcely reached home that evening, before Deb. Smith, who had left the farm-house on the day following the recovery of the money, suddenly made her appearance. She slipped into the kitchen without knocking, and crouched down in a corner of the wide chimney-place, before she spoke. Both mother and son were struck by the singular mixture of shyness and fear in her manner.

"I heerd all about it, to-day," she presently said, "and I would n't ha' come here, if I 'd ha' knowed where else

to go to. They 're after me. this time, Sandy's friends, in dead earnest ; they 'll have my blood, if they can git it ; but you said once't you 'd shelter me, Mr. Gilbert ! ”

“ So I will, Deborah ! ” he exclaimed ; “ do you doubt my word ? ”

“ No, I don't ; but I dunno how 't is — you 're rich now, and as well-born as the best of 'em, and Mary 's lawful married and got her lawful name ; and you both seem to be set among the folks that can't feel for a body like me not that your hearts is changed, only it comes different to me, somehow.”

“ Stay here, Deborah, until you feel sure you 're safe,” said Mary. “ If Gilbert or I should refuse to protect you, your blood would be upon our heads. I won't blame you for doubting us ; I know how easy it is to lose faith in others ; but if you think I was a friend to you while my name was disgraced, you must also remember that I knew the truth then as well as the world knows it now.”

“ Bless you for sayin' that, Mary ! There was n't much o' my name at any time ; but what little I might ha' had is clean gone — nothin' o' me left but the strong arm ! I 'm not a coward, as you know, Mr. Gilbert ; I 'll meet any man, face to face, in a fair and open fight. Let 'em come in broad day, and on the high road ! — not lay in wait in bushes and behind fences, to shoot me down unawares.”

They strove to quiet her fears, and little by little she grew composed. The desperate recklessness of her mood contrasted strangely with her morbid fear of an ambushed enemy. Gilbert suspected that it might be a temporary insanity, growing out of her remorse for having betrayed Sandy Flash. When she had been fed, and had smoked a pipe or two, she seemed quite to forget it, and was almost her own self when she went up to her bed in the western room.

The moon, three quarters full, was hanging over the barn, and made a peaceful, snowy light about the house.

She went to the window, opened it, and breathed the cool air of the April night. The "herring-frogs" were keeping up an incessant, birdlike chirp down the glen, and nearer at hand the plunging water of the mill-race made a soothing noise. It really seemed that the poor creature had found a quiet refuge at last.

Suddenly, something rustled and moved behind the mass of budding lilacs, at the farther corner of the garden-paling. She leaned forward; the next moment there was a flash, the crack of a musket rang sharp and loud through the dell, followed by a whiz and thud at her very ear. A thin drift of smoke rose above the bushes, and she saw a man's figure springing to the cover of the nearest apple-tree. In another minute, Gilbert made his appearance, gun in hand.

"Shoot him, Gilbert!" cried Deb. Smith; "it's Dougherty!"

Whoever it was, the man escaped; but by a singular coincidence, the Irish ostler disappeared that night from the Unicorn tavern, and was never again seen in the neighborhood.

The bullet had buried itself in the window-frame, after having passed within an inch or two of Deb. Smith's head.¹ To Gilbert's surprise, all her fear was gone; she was again fierce and defiant, and boldly came and went, from that night forth, saying that no bullet was or would be cast, to take her life.

Therein she was right; but it was a dreary life and a miserable death which awaited her. For twenty-five years she wandered about the neighborhood, achieving wonders in spinning, reaping and threshing, by the undiminished force of her arm, though her face grew haggard and her hair gray; sometimes plunging into wild drinking-bouts with the rough male companions of her younger days;

¹ The hole made by the bullet still remains in the window-frame of the old farm-house.

sometimes telling a new generation, with weeping and violent self-accusation, the story of her treachery ; but always with the fearful conviction of a yet unfulfilled curse hanging over her life. Whether it was ever made manifest, no man could tell ; but when she was found lying dead on the floor of her lonely cabin on the Woodrow farm, with staring, stony eyes, and the lines of unspeakable horror on her white face, there were those who recalled her own superstitious forebodings, and believed them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

It may readily be guessed that such extraordinary developments as those revealed in the preceding chapters produced more than a superficial impression upon a quiet community like that of Kennett and the adjoining townships. People secluded from the active movements of the world are drawn to take the greater interest in their own little family histories,—a feeling which by-and-by amounts to a partial sense of ownership, justifying not only any degree of advice or comment, but sometimes even actual interference.

The Quakers, who formed a majority of the population, and generally controlled public sentiment in domestic matters, through the purity of their own domestic life, at once pronounced in favor of Mary Barton. The fact of her having taken an oath was a slight stumbling-block to some; but her patience, her fortitude, her submission to what she felt to be the Divine Will, and the solemn strength which had upborne her on the last trying day, were qualities which none could better appreciate. The fresh, warm sympathies of the younger people, already given to Gilbert and Martha, now also embraced her; far and wide went the wonderful story, carrying with it a wave of pity and respect for her, of contempt and denunciation for her husband.

The old Friends and their wives came to visit her, in their stately chairs; almost daily, for a week or two, the quiet of the farm was invaded, either by them, or by the

few friends who had not forsaken her in her long disgrace, and were doubly welcome now. She received them all with the same grave, simple dignity of manner, gratefully accepting their expressions of sympathy, and quietly turning aside the inconsiderate questions that would have probed too deeply and painfully.

To an aged Friend, — a preacher of the sect, — who plumply asked her what course she intended to pursue towards her husband, she replied, —

“I will not trouble my season of thanksgiving. What is right for me to do will be made manifest when the occasion comes.”

This reply was so entirely in the Quaker spirit that the old man was silenced. Dr. Deane, who was present, looked upon her with admiration.

Whatever conjectures Alfred Barton might have made in advance, of the consequences which would follow the disclosure of his secret marriage, they could have borne no resemblance to the reality. It was not in his nature to imagine the changes which the years had produced in his wife. He looked forward to wealth, to importance in the community, and probably supposed that she would only be too glad to share the proud position with him. There would be a little embarrassment at first, of course ; but his money would soon make everything smooth.

Now, he was utterly defeated, crushed, overwhelmed. The public judgment, so much the more terrible where there is no escape from it, rolled down upon him. Avoided or coldly ignored by the staid, respectable farmers, openly insulted by his swaggering comrades of the fox-hunt and the bar-room, jeered at and tortured by the poor and idle hangers-on of the community, who took a malicious pleasure in thus repaying him for his former haughtiness and their own humility, he found himself a moral outcast. His situation became intolerable. He no longer dared to show himself in the village, or upon the highways, but slunk

about the house and farm, cursing himself, his father and the miserable luck of his life.

When, finally, Giles begged to know how soon his legacy would be paid, and hinted that he could n't stay any longer than to get possession of the money, for, hard as it might be to leave an old home, he must stop going to the mill, or getting the horses shod, or sitting in the Unicorn bar-room of a Saturday night, and a man might as well be in jail at once, and be done with it — when Alfred Barton heard all this, he deliberated, for a few minutes, whether it would not be a good thing to cut his own throat.

Either that, or beg for mercy ; no other course was left.

That evening he stole up to the village, fearful, at every step, of being seen and recognized, and knocked timidly at Dr. Deane's door. Martha and her father were sitting together, when he came into the room, and they were equally startled at his appearance. His large frame seemed to have fallen in, his head was bent, and his bushy whiskers had become quite gray ; deep wrinkles seamed his face ; his eyes were hollow, and the corners of his mouth drooped with an expression of intolerable misery.

"I wanted to say a word to Miss Martha, if she 'll let me," he said, looking from one to the other.

"I allowed thee to speak to my daughter once too often," Dr. Deane sternly replied. "What thee has to say now, must be said in my presence."

He hesitated a moment, then took a chair and sat down, turning towards Martha. "It's come to this," he said, "that I must have a little mercy, or lay hands on my own life. I have n't a word to say for myself ; I deserve it all. I'll do anything that's wanted of me — whatever Mary says, or people think is her right that she has n't yet got, if it's mine to give. You said you wished me well, Miss Martha, even at the time I acted so shamefully ; I remember that, and so I ask you to help me."

She saw that he spoke truth, at last, and all her con-

tempt and disgust could not keep down the quick sensation of pity which his wretchedness inspired. But she was unprepared for his appeal, and uncertain how to answer it.

"What would you have me do?" she asked.

"Go to Mary on my behalf! Ask her to pardon me, if she can, or say what I can do to earn her pardon — that the people may know it. They won't be so hard on me, if they know she's done that. Everything depends on her, and if it's true, as they say, that she's going to sue for a divorce and take back her own name for herself and Gilbert, and cut loose from me forever, why, it'll just" —

He paused, and buried his face in his hands.

"I have not heard of that," said Martha.

"Have n't you?" he asked. "But it's too likely to be true."

"Why not go directly to Mary, yourself?"

"I will, Miss Martha, if you'll go with me, and maybe say a kind word now and then, — that is, if you think it is n't too soon for mercy!"

"It is never too soon to *ask* for mercy," she said, coming to a sudden decision. "I will go with you; let it be to-morrow."

"Martha," warned Dr. Deane, "is n't thee a little hasty?"

"Father, I decide nothing. It is in Mary's hands. He thinks my presence will give him courage, and that I cannot refuse."

The next morning, the people of Kennett Square were again startled out of their proprieties by the sight of Alfred Barton, pale, agitated, and avoiding the gaze of every one, waiting at Dr. Deane's gate, and then riding side by side with Martha down the Wilmington road. An hour before, she had dispatched Joe Fairthorn with a note to Gilbert, informing him of the impending visit. Once on the way, she feared lest she had ventured too far; it might be, as her father had said, too hasty; and the coming meeting

with Gilbert and his mother disquieted her not a little. It was a silent, anxious ride for both.

When they reached the gate, Gilbert was on hand to receive them. His face always brightened at the sight of Martha, and his hands lifted her as tenderly as ever from the saddle. "Have I done right?" she anxiously whispered.

"It is for mother to say," he whispered back.

Alfred Barton advanced, offering his hand. Gilbert looked upon his father's haggard, imploring face, a moment; a recollection of his own disgrace shot into his heart, to soften, not to exasperate; and he accepted the hand. Then he led the way into the house.

Mary Barton had simply said to her son,—"I felt that he would come, sooner or later, and that I must give him a hearing—better now, perhaps, since you and Martha will be with me."

They found her awaiting them, pale and resolute.

Gilbert and Martha moved a little to one side, leaving the husband and wife facing each other. Alfred Barton was too desperately moved to shrink from Mary's eyes; he strove to read something in her face, which might spare him the pain of words; but it was a strange face he looked upon. Not that of the black-eyed, bright-cheeked girl, with the proud carriage of her head and the charming scorn of her red lip, who had mocked, fascinated, and bewildered him. The eyes were there, but they had sunk into the shade of the brows, and looked upon him with an impenetrable expression; the cheeks were pale, the mouth firm and rigid, and out of the beauty which seduced had grown a power to resist and command.

"Will you shake hands with me, Mary?" he faltered.

She said nothing, but moved her right hand slightly towards him. It lay in his own a moment, cold and passive.

"Mary!" he cried, falling on his knees at her feet, "I'm

a ruined, wretched man! No one speaks to me but to curse; I've no friend left in the world; the very farm-hand leaves me! I don't know what 'll become of me, unless you feel a little pity — not that I deserve any, but I ask it of you, in the name of God!"

Martha clung to Gilbert's arm, trembling, and more deeply moved than she was willing to show. Mary Barton's face was convulsed by some passing struggle, and when she spoke, her voice was hoarse and broken.

"You know what it is, then," she said, "to be disgraced in the eyes of the world. If you have suffered so much in these two weeks, you may guess what I have borne for twenty-five years!"

"I see it now, Mary!" he cried, "as I never saw it before. Try me! Tell me what to do!"

"The Lord has done it, already; there is nothing left."

He groaned; his head dropped hopelessly upon his breast.

Gilbert felt that Martha's agitation ceased. She quietly released her hold of his arm, lifted her head, and spoke, —

"Mother, forgive me if I speak when I should hold my peace; I would only remind you that there is yet one thing left. It is true, as you say; the Lord has justified you in His own way, and at His own time, and has revenged the wrong done to you by branding the sin committed towards Himself. Now He leaves the rest to your own heart. Think that He holds back and waits for the words that shall declare whether you understand the spirit in which He deals towards His children!"

"Martha, my dear child!" Mary Barton exclaimed, — "what can I do?"

"It is not for me to advise you, mother. You, who put my impatient pride to shame, and make my love for Gilbert seem selfish by contrast with your long self-sacrifice! What right have I, who have done nothing, to speak to you, who have done so much that we never can reckon it? But,

remember that in the Lord's government of the world pardon follows repentance, and it is not for us to exact like for like, to the uttermost farthing !”

Mary Barton sank into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and wept aloud.

There were tears in Martha's eyes ; her voice trembled, and her words came with a softness and tenderness that soothed while they pierced :

“ Mother, I am a woman like yourself ; and, as a woman, I feel the terrible wrong that has been done to you. It may be as hard for you now to forget, as then to bear ; but it is certainly greater and nobler to forgive than to await justice ! Because I reverence you as a strong and pure and great-hearted woman — because I want to see the last and best and sweetest grace of our sex added to your name — and lastly, for Gilbert's sake, who can feel nothing but pain in seeing his father execrated and shunned — I ask your forgiveness for your husband !”

“ Mary !” Alfred Barton cried, lifting up his head in a last appeal, “ Mary, this much, at least ! Don't go to the courts for a divorce ! Don't get back your own name for yourself and Gilbert ! Keep mine, and make it more respectable for me ! And I won't ask you to pardon me, for I see you can't !”

“ It is all clear to me, at last !” said Mary Barton. “ I thank you, Martha, my child, for putting me in the right path. Alfred, don't kneel to me ; if the Lord can pardon, who am I that I should be unforgiving ? I fear me I was nigh to forfeit His mercy. Gilbert, yours was half the shame ; yours is half the wrong ; can you join me in pardoning your father and my husband ?”

Gilbert was powerfully moved by the conflict of equally balanced emotions, and but for the indication which Martha had given, he might not at once have been able to decide. But it seemed now that his course was also clear. He said, —

"Mother, since you have asked the question, I know how it should be answered. If you forgive your husband, I forgive my — my father."

He stepped forward, seized Alfred Barton gently by the shoulder, and raised him to his feet. Mary Barton then took her husband's hand in hers, and said, in a solemn voice. —

"I forgive you, Alfred, and will try to forget. I know not what you may have heard said, but I never meant to go before the court for a divorce. Your name is a part of my right, a part of Gilbert's — our son's — right; it is true that you have debased the name, but we will keep it and make it honorable! We will not do that to the name of Barton which you have done to the name of Potter!"

It was very evident that though she had forgiven, she had not yet forgotten. The settled endurance of years could not be unlearned in a moment. Alfred Barton felt that her forgiveness implied no returning tenderness, not even an increase of respect; but it was more than he had dared to hope, and he felt humbly grateful. He saw that a consideration for Gilbert's position had been the chief element to which he owed his wife's relenting mood, and this knowledge was perhaps his greatest encouragement.

"Mary," he said, "you are kinder than I deserve. I wish I could make you and Gilbert understand all that I have felt. Don't think my place was easy; it was n't. It was a hell of another kind. I have been punished in my way, and will be now to the end o' my life, while you two will be looked up to, and respected beyond any in the neighborhood; and if I'm not treated like a dog, it'll only be for your sakes! Will you let me say to the people that you have pardoned me? Will you say it yourselves?"

Martha, and perhaps Gilbert also, felt that it was the reflected image of Alfred Barton's meanness, as it came back to him in the treatment he had experienced, rather than his own internal consciousness of it, which occasioned

his misery. But his words were true thus far; his life was branded by it, and the pardon of those he had wronged could not make that life more than tolerable.

"Why not?" said Gilbert, replying to him. "There has been enough of secrets. I am not ashamed of forgiveness — my shame is, that forgiveness is necessary."

Alfred Barton looked from mother to son with a singular, wistful expression. He seemed uncertain whether to speak or how to select his words. His vain, arrogant spirit was completely broken, but no finer moral instinct came in its place to guide him; his impulses were still coarse, and took, from habit, the selfish color of his nature. There are some persons whom even humiliation clothes with a certain dignity; but he was not one of them. There are others whose tact, in such emergencies, assumes the features of principle, and sets up a feeble claim to respect; but this quality is a result of culture, which he did not possess. He simply saw what would relieve him from the insupportable load of obloquy under which he groaned, and awkwardly hazarded the pity he had excited, in asking for it.

"Mary," he stammered, "I — I hardly know how to say the words, but you'll understand me; I want to make good to you all the wrong I did, and there seems no way but this, — if you'll let me care for you, slave for you, anything you please; you shall have your own say in house and farm; Ann'll give up everything to you. She always liked you, she says, and she's lonely since th' old man died and nobody comes near us — not just at once, I mean, but after awhile, when you've had time to think of it, and Gilbert's married. You're independent in your own right, I know, and need n't do it; but, see! it'd give me a chance, and maybe Gilbert would n't feel quite so hard towards me, and" --

He stopped, chilled by the increasing coldness of his wife's face. She did not immediately reply; to Martha's eye she seemed to be battling with some proud, vindictive instinct. But she spoke at last, and calmly:

"Alfred, you should not have gone so far. I have pardoned you, and that means more than the words. It means that I must try to overcome the bitterness of my recollections, that I must curb the tongues of others when they are raised against you, must greet you when we meet, and in all proper ways show the truth of my forgiveness to the world. Anger and reproach may be taken from the heart, and yet love be as far off as ever. If anything ever could lead me back to you it would not be love, but duty to my son, and his desire; but I cannot see the duty now. I may never see it. Do not propose this thing again. I will only say, if it be any comfort to you, that if you try to show your repentance as I my pardon, try to clean your name from the stain you have cast upon it, my respect shall keep pace with that of your neighbors, and I shall in this way, and in no other, be drawn nearer to you!"

"Gilbert," said Alfred Barton, "I never knew your mother before to-day. What she says gives me some hope, and yet it makes me afraid. I'll try to bring her nearer, I will, indeed; but I've been governed so long by th' old man that I don't seem to have any right strength o' my own. I must have some help, and you're the only one I can ask it of; will you come and see me sometimes? I've been so proud of you, all to myself, my boy! and if I thought you could once call me 'father' before I die" —

Gilbert was not proof against these words and the honest tears by which they were accompanied. Many shy, hesitating tokens of affection in his former intercourse with Alfred Barton, suddenly recurred to his mind, with their true interpretation. His load had been light, compared to his mother's; he had only learned the true wrong in the hour of reparation; and moreover, in assuming his father's name he became sensitive to the prominence of its shame.

"Father," he answered, "if you have forfeited a son's obedience, you have still a man's claim to be helped. Mother is right; it is in your power to come nearer to us

She must stand aside and wait ; but I can cross the line which separates you, and from this time on I shall never cross it to remind you of what is past and pardoned, but to help you, and all of us, to forget it ! ”

Martha laid her hand upon Gilbert's shoulder, leaned up and kissed him upon the cheek.

“ Rest here ! ” she said. “ Let a good word close the subject ! Gilbert, take your father out and show him your farm. Mother, it is near dinner-time ; I will help you set the table. After dinner, Mr. Barton, you and I will ride home together.”

Her words were obeyed ; each one felt that no more should be said at that time. Gilbert showed the barn, the stables, the cattle in the meadow, and the fields rejoicing in the soft May weather ; Martha busied herself in kitchen and cellar, filling up the pauses of her labor with cheerful talk ; and when the four met at the table, so much of the constraint in their relation to each other had been conquered, that a stranger would never have dreamed of the gulf which had separated them a few hours before. Martha shrewdly judged that when Alfred Barton had eaten at his wife's table, they would both meet more easily in the future. She did not expect that the breach could ever be quite filled ; but she wished, for Gilbert's sake, to make it as narrow as possible.

After dinner, while the horses were being saddled, the lovers walked down the garden-path, between the borders of blue iris and mountain-pink.

“ Gilbert,” said Martha, “ are you satisfied with what has happened ? ”

“ Yes,” he answered, “ but it has shown to me that something more must be done.”

“ What ? ”

“ Martha, are these the only two who should be brought nearer ? ”

She looked at him with a puzzled face. There was a

laughing light in his eyes, which brought a new lustre to hers, and a delicate blush to her fair cheeks.

“Is it not too soon for me to come?” she whispered.

“You *have* come,” he answered; “you were in your place; and it will be empty — the house will be lonely, the farm without its mistress — until you return to us!”

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE WEDDING.

THE neighborhood had decreed it. There was but one just, proper, and satisfactory conclusion to all these events. The decision of Kennett was unanimous that its story should be speedily completed. New-Garden, Marlborough, and Pennsbury, so far as heard from, gave their hearty consent; and the people would have been seriously disappointed — the tide of sympathy might even have been checked — had not Gilbert Barton and Martha Deane prepared to fulfil the parts assigned to them.

Dr. Deane, of course, floated with the current. He was too shrewd to stand forth as a conspicuous obstacle to the consummation of the popular sense of justice. He gave, at once, his full consent to the nuptials, and took the necessary steps, in advance, for the transfer of his daughter's fortune into her own hands. In short, as Miss Lavender observed, there was an end of snarls. The lives of the lovers were taken up, as by a skilful hand, and evenly reeled together.

Gilbert now might have satisfied his ambition (and the people, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, would have sanctioned it) by buying the finest farm in the neighborhood; but Martha had said, —

“No other farm can be so much *yours*, and none so welcome a home to me. Let us be satisfied with it, at least for the first years.”

And therein she spoke wisely.

It was now the middle of May, and the land was clothed

in tender green, and filled with the sweet breath of sap and bud and blossom. The vivid emerald of the willow-trees, the blush of orchards, and the cones of snowy bloom along the wood-sides, shone through and illumined even the days of rain. The Month of Marriage wooed them in every sunny morning, in every twilight fading under the torch of the lovers' star.

In spite of Miss Lavender's outcries, and Martha's grave doubts, a fortnight's delay was all that Gilbert would allow. He would have dispensed with bridal costumes and merry-makings, — so little do men understand of these matters; but he was hooted down, overruled, ignored, and made to feel his proper insignificance. Martha almost disappeared from his sight during the interval. She was sitting upstairs in a confusion of lutestring, whalebone, silk, and cambric; and when she came down to him for a moment, the kiss had scarcely left her lips before she began to speak of the make of his new coat, and the fashion of the articles he was still expected to furnish.

If he visited Fairthorn's, it was even worse. The sight of him threw Sally into such a flutter that she sewed the right side of one breadth to the wrong side of another, attempted to clear-starch a woollen stocking, or even, on one occasion, put a fowl into the pot, unpicked and undressed. It was known all over the country that Sally and Mark Deane were to be bridesmaid and groomsman, and they both determined to make a brave appearance.

But there was another feature of the coming nuptials which the people did not know. Gilbert and Martha had determined that Miss Betsy Lavender should be second bridesmaid, and Martha had sent to Wilmington for a purple silk, and a stomacher of the finest cambric, in which to array her. A groomsman of her age was not so easy to find; but young Pratt, who had stood so faithfully by Gilbert during the chase of Sandy Flash, merrily avowed his willingness to play the part; and so it was settled without Miss Lavender's knowledge.

The appointed morning came, bringing a fair sky, mottled with gentle, lingering clouds, and a light wind from the west. The wedding company were to meet at Kennett Square, and then ride to Squire Sinclair's, where the ceremony would be performed by that magistrate; and before ten o'clock, the hour appointed for starting, all the surrounding neighborhood poured into the village. The hitching-bar in front of the Unicorn, and every post of fence or garden-paling, was occupied by the tethered horses. The wedding-guests, comprising some ten or fifteen persons, assembled at Dr. Deane's, and each couple, as they arrived, produced an increasing excitement among the spectators.

The fact that Alfred Barton had been formally pardoned by his wife and son, did not lessen the feeling with which he was regarded, but it produced a certain amount of forbearance. The people were curious to know whether he had been bidden to the wedding, and the conviction was general that he had no business to be there. The truth is, it had been left free to him whether to come or not, and he had very prudently chosen to be absent.

Dr. Deane had set up a "chair," which was to be used for the first time on this occasion. It was a ponderous machine, with drab body and wheels, and curtains of drab camlet looped up under its stately canopy. When it appeared at the gate, the Doctor came forth, spotless in attire, bland, smiling, a figure of sober gloss and agreeable odors. He led Mary Barton by the hand; and her steel-colored silk and white crape shawl so well harmonized with his appearance, that the two might have been taken for man and wife. Her face was calm, serene, and full of quiet gratitude. They took their places in the chair, the lines were handed to the Doctor, and he drove away, nodding right and left to the crowd.

Now the horses were brought up in pairs, and the younger guests began to mount. The people gathered

closer and closer; and when Sam appeared, leading the well-known and beloved Roger, there was a murmur which, in a more demonstrative community, would have been a cheer. Somebody had arranged a wreath of lilac and snowy viburnum, and fastened it around Roger's forehead and he seemed to wear it consciously and proudly. Many a hand was stretched forth to pat and stroke the noble animal, and everybody smiled when he laid his head caressingly over the neck of Martha's gray.

Finally, only six horses remained unmounted; then there seemed to be a little delay in-doors. It was explained when young Pratt appeared, bold and bright, leading the reluctant Miss Lavender, rustling in purple splendor, and blushing — actually blushing — as she encountered the eyes of the crowd. The latter were delighted. There was no irony in the voice that cried, — “Hurrah for Betsy Lavender!” and the cheer that followed was the expression of a downright, hearty good will. She looked around from her saddle, blushing, smiling, and on the point of bursting into tears; and it was a godsend, as she afterwards remarked, that Mark Deane and Sally Fairthorn appeared at that moment.

Mark, in sky-blue coat and breeches, suggested, with his rosy face and yellow locks, a son of the morning; while Sally's white muslin and cherry-colored scarf heightened the rich beauty of her dark hair and eyes, and her full, pouting lips. They were a buxom pair, and both were too happy in each other and in the occasion, to conceal the least expression of it.

There now only remained our hero and heroine, who immediately followed. No cheer greeted them, for the wonderful chain of circumstances which had finally brought them together, made the joy of the day solemn, and the sympathy of the people reverential. Mark and Sally represented the delight of betrothal; these two the earnest sanctity of wedlock.

Gilbert was plainly yet richly dressed in a bottle-green coat, with white waistcoat and breeches ; his ruffles, gloves, hat, and boots were irreproachable. So manly looking a bridegroom had not been seen in Kennett for many a day. Martha's dress of heavy pearl-gray satin was looped up over a petticoat of white dimity, and she wore a short cloak of white crape. Her hat, of the latest style, was adorned with a bunch of roses and a white, drooping feather. In the saddle, she was charming ; and as the bridal pair slowly rode forward, followed by their attendants in the proper order, a murmur of admiration, in which there was no envy and no ill-natured qualification, went after them.

A soft glitter of sunshine, crossed by the shadows of slow-moving clouds, lay upon the landscape. Westward, the valley opened in quiet beauty, the wooded hills on either side sheltering, like protecting arms, the white farm-houses, the gardens, and rosy orchards scattered along its floor. On their left, the tall grove rang with the music of birds, and was gay, through all its light-green depths, with the pink blossoms of the wild azalea. The hedges, on either side, were purple with young sprays, and a bright, breathing mass of sweet-brier and wild grape crowned the overhanging banks, between which the road ascended the hill beyond.

At first the company were silent ; but the enlivening motion of the horses, the joy of the coming summer, the affectionate sympathy of Nature, soon disposed them to a lighter mood. At Hallowell's, the men left their hoes in the corn-field, and the women their household duties, to greet them by the roadside. Mark looked up at the new barn, and exclaimed, —

“ Not quite a year ago ! Do you mind it, Gilbert ? ”

Martha pointed to the green turf in front of the house, and said with an arch voice, —

“ Gilbert, do you remember the question you put to me that evening ? ”

And finally Sally burst out, in mock indignation, --

"Gilbert, there's where you snapped me up, because I wanted you to dance with Martha; what do you think of yourself now?"

"You all forget," he answered, "that you are speaking of somebody else."

"How? somebody else?" asked Sally.

"Yes; I mean Gilbert Potter."

"Not a bad turn-off," remarked Miss Lavender. "He's too much for you. But I'm glad, anyhow, you've got your tongues, for it was too much like a buryin' before, and me fixed up like King Solomon, what for, I'd like to know? and the day made o' purpose for a weddin', and true-love all right for once't — I'd like just to holler and sing and make merry to my heart's content, with a nice young man alongside o' me, too, a thing that don't often happen!"

They were heartily, but not boisterously, merry after this; but as they reached the New-Garden road, there came a wild yell from the rear, and the noise of galloping hoofs. Before the first shock of surprise had subsided, the Fairthorn gray mare thundered up, with Joe and Jake upon her back, the scarlet lining of their blue cloaks flying to the wind, their breeches covered with white hair from the mare's hide, and their faces wild with delight. They yelled again as they drew rein at the head of the procession.

"Why, what upon earth" — began Sally; but Joe saved her the necessity of a question.

"Daddy said we should n't go!" he cried. "But we *would*, — we got Bonnie out o' the field, and put off! Cousin Martha, you'll let us go along and see you get married; won't you, now? Maybe we'll never have another chance!"

This incident produced great amusement. The boys received the permission they coveted, but were ordered to the rear Mark reminding them that as he was soon to be

their uncle, they must learn, betimes, to give heed to his authority.

"Be quiet, Mark!" exclaimed Sally, with a gentle slap.

"Well, I don't begrudge it to 'em," said Miss Lavender. "It's somethin' for 'em to remember when they're men-grown; and they belong to the fam'ly, which I don't; but never mind, all the same, no more do you, Mr. Pratt; and I wish I was younger, to do credit to you!"

Merrily trotted the horses along the bit of level upland; and then, as the land began to fall towards the western branch of Redley Creek, they saw the Squire's house on a green knoll to the north, and Dr. Deane's new chair already resting in the shade of the gigantic sycamore at the door. The lane-gates were open, the Squire's parlor was arranged for their reception; and after the ladies had put themselves to rights, in the upper rooms, the company gathered together for the ceremony.

Sunshine, and hum of bees, and murmur of winds, and scent of flowers, came in through the open windows, and the bridal pair seemed to stand in the heart of the perfect spring-time. Yet tears were shed by all the women except the bride; and Sally Fairthorn was so absorbed by the rush of her emotions, that she came within an ace of saying "I will!" when the Squire put the question to Martha. The ceremony was brief and plain, but the previous history of the parties made it very impressive. When they had been pronounced man and wife, and the certificate of marriage had been duly signed and witnessed by all present, Mary Barton stepped forward and kissed her son and daughter with a solemn tenderness. Then the pent-up feelings of all the others broke loose, and the amount of embracing which followed was something quite unusual for Kennett. Betsy Lavender was not cheated out of her due share; on the contrary, it was ever afterwards reported that she received more salutes than even the bride. She was kissed by Gilbert, by Mark, by her young partner, by

Dr. Deane, and lastly by the jolly Squire himself, — to say nothing of the feminine kisses, which, indeed, being very imperfect gifts, hardly deserve to be recorded.

“ Well ! ” she exclaimed, pushing her ruffled hair behind her ears, and smoothing down her purple skirt, “ to think o’ my bein’ kissed by so many men, in my old days ! — but why not ? — it may be my last chance, as Joe Fairthorn says, and laugh if you please, I ’ve got the best of it ; and I don’t belie my natur’, for twistin’ your head away and screechin’ is only make-believe, and the more some screeches the more they want to be kissed ; but fair and square, say I, — if you want it take it, and that’s just what I ’ve done ! ”

There was a fresh rush for Miss Lavender after this, and she stood her ground with commendable patience, until Mark ventured to fold her in a good-natured hug, when she pushed him away, saying, —

“ For the Lord’s sake, don’t spile my new things ! There — go ’way, now ! I ’ve had enough to last me ten year ! ”

Dr. Deane soon set out with Mary Barton, in the chair, and the rest of the company mounted their horses, to ride back to Kennett Square by the other road, past the quarries and across Tuffkenamon.

As they halted in the broad, shallow bed of the creek, letting their horses drink from the sparkling water, while the wind rollicked among the meadow bloom of golden saxifrage and scarlet painted-cup and blue spiderwort before them, the only accident of the day occurred ; but it was not of a character to disturb their joyous mood.

The old Fairthorn mare stretched her neck to its utmost length before she bent it to drink, obliging Joe to lean forwards over her shoulder, to retain his hold of the short rein. Jake, holding on to Joe, leaned with him, and they waited in this painful posture till the mare slowly filled herself from the stream. Finally she seemed to be

satisfied ; she paused, snorted, and then, with wide nostrils, drank an equal amount of air. Her old sides swelled the saddle-girth, broken in two places long before, and mended with tow-strings, suddenly parted, and Joe, Jake, saddle and all, tumbled down her neck into the water. They scrambled out in a lamentable plight, soused and dripping, amid the endless laughter of the company, and were glad to keep to the rear for the remainder of the ride.

In Dr. Deane's house, meanwhile, there were great preparations for the wedding-dinner. A cook had been brought from Wilmington, at an unheard-of expense, and the village was filled with rumors of the marvellous dishes she was to produce. There were pippins encased in orange-peel and baked ; a roasted peacock, with tail spread ; a stuffed rock-fish ; a whole ham enveloped in dough, like a loaf of bread, and set in the oven ; and a wilderness of the richest and rarest pies, tarts, and custards.

Whether all these rumors were justified by the dinner, we will not undertake to say ; it is certain that the meal, which was spread in the large sitting-room, was most bountiful. No one was then shocked by the decanters of Port and Canary wine upon the sideboard, or refused to partake of the glasses of foamy egg-nog offered to them from time to time, through the afternoon. The bride-cake was considered a miracle of art, and the fact that Martha divided it with a steady hand, making the neatest and cleanest of cuts, was considered a good omen for her married life. Bits of the cake were afterwards in great demand throughout the neighborhood, not so much to eat, as to dream upon.

The afternoon passed away rapidly, with mirth and noise, in the adjoining parlor. Sally Fairthorn found a peculiar pleasure in calling her friend "Martha Barton." whereupon Mark said, —

"Wait a bit, Martha, and you can pay her back. Daddy

Fairthorn promised this morning to give me a buildin' lot off the field back o' the corner. and just as soon as Rudd's house is up, I 'm goin' to work at mine."

"Mark, do hush!" Sally exclaimed, reddening, "and before everybody!"

Miss Lavender sat in the midst, stately, purple, and so transformed that she professed she no longer knew her own self. She was, nevertheless, the life of the company the sense of what she had done to bring on the marriage was a continual source of inspiration. Therefore, when songs were proposed and sung, and Mark finally called upon her, uproariously seconded by all the rest, she was moved, for the last time in her life, to comply.

"I dunno what you mean, expectin' such a thing o' me," she said. "'Pears to me I 'm fool enough already, settin' here in purple and fine linen, like the Queen o' Rome, — not that I don't like singin', but the contràry, quite the reverse; but with me it 'd be a squawk and nothin' else; and fine feathers may make fine birds for what I care, more like a poll-parrot than a nightingale, and they say you must stick thorns into 'em to make 'em sing; but I guess it 'll be t' other way, and my singin' 'll stick thorns into you!"

They would take no denial; she could and must sing them a song. She held out until Martha said, "for my wedding-day, Betsy!" and Gilbert added, "and mine, too." Then she declared, "Well, if I must, I s'pose I must. But as for weddin'-songs, such as I 've heerd in my younger days, I dunno one of 'em, and my head 's pretty much cleared o' such things, savin' and exceptin' one that might be a sort o' warnin' for Mark Deane, who knows? — not that there 's sea-farin' men about these parts; but never mind, all the same; if you don't like it, Mark, you 've brung it onto yourself!"

Thereupon, after shaking herself, gravely composing her face, and clearing her throat, she began, in a high, shrill

piercing voice, rocking her head to the peculiar lilt of the words, and interpolating short explanatory remarks, to sing —

THE BALLAD OF THE HOUSE-CARPENTER.

“ ‘ Well-met, well-met, my own true-love ! ’

She says, —

‘ Well-met, well-met, cried *he* ;
For ’t is I have returned from the salt, salt sea,
And it ’s all for the love of thee ! ’

“ ‘ It ’s I might ha’ married a king’s daughter fair,’

He goes on sayin’, —

‘ And fain would she ha’ married me,
But it ’s I have refused those crowns of gold,
And it ’s all for the love of thee ! ’

“ Then *she*, —

“ ‘ If you might ha’ married a king’s daughter fair,’
I think you are for to blame;
For it ’s I have married a house-carpenter,
And I think he ’s a fine young man ! ’

“ So look out, Mark ! and remember, all o’ you, that they’re talkin’ turn about ; and he begins —

“ ‘ If you ’ll forsake your house-carpenter
And go along with me,
I ’ll take you to where the grass grows green
On the banks of the sweet Wil-lee ! ’

“ ‘ If I forsake my house-carpenter,
And go along with thee,
It ’s what have you got for to maintain me upon,
And to keep me from slave-ree ? ’

“ It ’s I have sixteen ships at sea,
All sailing for dry land,
And four-and-twenty sailors all on board
Shall be at your command ! ’

“ She then took up her lovely little babe,
And she gave it kisses three ;
‘ Lie still, lie still, my lovely little babe,
And keep thy father comin’-a-nee ! ’

"She dressed herself in rich array,
And she walked in high degree,
And the four-and-twenty sailors took 'em on board,
And they sailed for the open sea!

"They had not been at sea two weeks,
And I 'm sure it was not three,
Before this maid she began for to weep,
And she wept most bitter-lee.

"'It 's do you weep for your gold?' cries he;
'Or do you weep for your store,
Or do you weep for your house-carpenter
You never shall see any more?'

"'I do not weep for my gold,' cries she,
'Nor I do not weep for my store,
But it 's I do weep for my lovely little babe,
I never shall see any more!'

"They had not been at sea three weeks,
And I 'm sure it was not four,
When the vessel it did spring a leak,
And it sank to rise no more!"

Now, Mark, here comes the Moral:

"Oh, cruel be ye, sea-farin' men,
Oh, cruel be your lives, —
A-robbing of the house-carpenters,
And a-taking of their wives!"

The shouts and laughter which greeted the conclusion of Miss Lavender's song brought Dr. Deane into the room. He was a little alarmed lest his standing in the Society might be damaged by so much and such unrestrained merriment under his roof. Still he had scarcely the courage to reprimand the bright, joyous faces before him; he only smiled, shook his head, and turned to leave.

"I 'm a-goin', too," said Miss Lavender, rising. "The sun 's not an hour high, and the Doctor, or somebody, must take Mary Barton home; and it 's about time the rest o' you was makin' ready; though they 've gone on with the supper, there 's enough to do when you get there!"

The chair rolled away again, and the bridal party re-

mounted their horses in the warm, level light of the sinking sun. They were all in their saddles except Gilbert and Martha.

"Go on!" he cried, in answer to their calls; "we will follow."

"It won't be half a home-comin', without you're along," said Mark; "but I see you want it so. Come on, boys and girls!"

Gilbert returned to the house and met Martha, descending the stairs in her plain riding-dress. She descended into his open arms, and rested there, silent, peaceful, filled with happy rest.

"My wife at last, and forever!" he whispered.

They mounted and rode out of the village. The fields were already beginning to grow gray under the rosy amber of the western sky. The breeze had died away, but the odors it had winnowed from orchard and meadow still hung in the air. Faint cheeps and chirps of nestling life came from the hedges and grassy nooks of bank and thicket, but they deepened, not disturbed, the delicious repose settling upon the land. Husband and wife rode slowly, and their friendly horses pressed nearer to each other, and there was none to see how their eyes grew deeper and darker with perfect tenderness, their lips more sweetly soft and warm, with the unspoken, because unspeakable, fortune of love. In the breath of that happy twilight all the pangs of the Past melted away; disgrace, danger, poverty, trial, were behind them; and before them, nestling yet unseen in the green dell which divided the glimmering landscape, lay the peace, the shelter, the lifelong blessing of Home.

THE END.

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